

# Conservation Advisory Council Town of Hillsdale, NY

David Lewis, Chair  
Amy Davidsen  
Paul Duernberger  
Mary King  
Gretchen Stevens

## MINUTES CAC MEETING, 20 JUNE 2024

The meeting was convened at 7:12 pm at the Town Hall. Amy, David, and Gretchen attended. Jamie Carano attended as the Town Board liaison.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The April 2024 minutes were approved. (There was no meeting in May 2024 because of the Town Hall mold remediation work.)

### **Old Business**

#### **Comprehensive Plan/Zoning Revision**

Jamie and Gretchen will draft a basic scope for the project, and will seek ballpark estimates from some consultants so that we know the amount of grant funds to apply for. We will need letters of support from various entities (including the CAC), and consent from the town supervisor.

#### **Culvert Project**

For both CSC and WQIP grants, the application deadline for culvert retrofitting and replacement is 31 July 2024. A Hillsdale project should focus on the high-priority culverts identified in the 2019 Hillsdale culvert study (*Town of Hillsdale Road Stream Crossing Management Plan*): on Breezy Hill and on Mitchell Street.

#### **Hazard Mitigation**

David (who is on the Hazard Mitigation Team) will update the Table 3 Hazard Mitigation table to be submitted to Tighe & Bond, the county's consultants.

Jamie says that the Hazard Mitigation Committee needs to show minutes of monthly meetings. If there is a CARP-equivalent statement that fits into FEMA's interests, we should add.

#### **Climate Smart Community**

The deadline for submitting documentation for renewing Hillsdale's Bronze certification is the end of June. Paul's article for the town newsletter is a part of the documentation.

#### **Community Forest**

At the June Town Board meeting, Gretchen spoke to the board about a possible Community Forest project. Although there seemed to be some interest in such a project, the board said that they were not ready to go ahead because there are too many other urgent matters that they are dealing with now. They said, however, that the CAC should let them know if we become aware of a suitable site with a willing landowner.

### **Riverkeeper/ILoveMyPark event**

Gretchen reported on the 4 May project to remove non-native invasive plants in the Roeliff Jansen Kill corridor at the Roe Jan Park. This was part of Riverkeeper's annual Riversweep project throughout the Hudson Valley for cleanup of trash, planting of trees and shrubs, and removal of invasive species along the Hudson River and its tributaries. Eight volunteers removed multiflora rose, Bell's honeysuckle, and common reed from the Roe Jan floodplain at the park.

### **Roe Jan Park Mowing**

At the request of supervisor Mike Dvorchak, Gretchen met with Mike, Joanna Virello, Michael Nicosia (a Copake biologist) on 15 May to discuss the mowing schedule for the large hayfields and the plight of grassland breeding birds at the park. Bobolinks, savannah sparrow, and other ground-nesting grassland birds typically start nesting in May, so any mowing that occurs after about 15 May is likely to destroy nests, eggs, or young. Grassland breeding bird populations in the Northeast have been in steep decline in recent decades, and there is much concern that large hayfields act as population "sinks" that attract nesting birds and then the nests are routinely destroyed by mowing. At the 15 May meeting at the Town Hall, the four agreed that the best compromise option for the Roe Jan Park for this year would be to mow as soon as possible in May, and then delay the second mowing until mid-August. Mike talked to Mr. Main, the proprietor of Berkshire Mountain Dairy which leases the fields from the Town of Hillsdale. Mike requested that Mr. Main mow in May and to raise the cutter bar to six inches or higher in the hope that some of the nests and many small animals (e.g., meadow voles, snakes, turtles) would be spared. Mr. Main agreed to a late-May cut date and a mid-August second cut, but said that his equipment could not be raised to six inches.

### **Water Testing**

Gretchen has not yet spoken to her CAC contacts in New Lebanon about how they organized the recent water testing program in that town.

### **CAC Webpage**

Much information on the CAC webpage on the town website is out-of-date, so all CAC members are requested to review the page and send edits to David.

### **Climate Smart Communities Task Force update**

Paul had sent a note to the CAC saying that the Climate Smart Communities Task Force continues to work for a NYSERDA grant. Currently the Clean Energy Community Task Force (CEC) has 3400 points towards a goal of 5000 points. The CEC team is working on three campaigns that include Electric Vehicles, Community Solar, and Heat/Cooling for Hillsdale registrants. Points are also accrued with a recertification of the Bronze level Climate Smart Community status. A recent Benchmarking project has been completed thanks to the Town Clerk and Board Member Jamie Carano. Energy usage has been monitored for 2022 and 2023 in town buildings. The report has been posted on the town's website.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02pm.

### **Action Items**

Everyone: Review CAC webpage and send edits to David

David: Edit Hazard Mitigation table

Gretchen: Talk to New Lebanon CAC about water testing

Gretchen & Jamie: Work on funding application for Comprehensive Plan review