

Conservation Advisory Council Town of Hillsdale, NY

David Lewis, Chair
Amy Davidsen
Mary King
Gretchen Stevens
(open position)

MINUTES CAC MEETING, 26 FEBRUARY 2026

The meeting was convened at 7:08pm at the Hillsdale Town Hall. All members were present. Jamie Carano Nordenstrom (Town Council liaison) was absent.

Approval of Minutes

The January minutes had been approved via email.

Old Business

CAC Open Position

David will ask Robina about Ed Frederick's application, which Ed told us he had sent in early February. Jorn Ake has not yet applied as far as we know.

Culverts

Tracy Brown (Trout Unlimited) examined the southern Mitchell Street culvert in January, and sent us a link to her [report](#). In a phone conversation with Gretchen, Tracy said that combining the Mitchell Street culvert with two or three others—preferably ones identified at significant aquatic barriers—would make a good project for a WQIP grant.

Gretchen asked Richard Briggs to rank the four culverts identified in the 2019 culvert study as the highest priorities for replacement, and his response was:

1. Breezy Hill
2. Collins St.
3. Mitchell St. (north)
4. Tribrook Rd

Richard said that this year the town may go after a WQIP grant to build the salt shed. The 2026 WQIP Request for Applications has not yet been issued, but last year's RFA said that a municipality could apply for up to five projects in a single grant round, so it's possible that Hillsdale could apply for a culvert project as well as a salt shed project. We should talk further with Richard and Mike about this.

Hillsdale Town Newsletter

Mary drafted an article about rat poison for the newsletter. Gretchen will review and edit it before sending on to other CAC members for review.

Sponsor a Film?

Amy said that a resident is interested in showing the latest Doug Tallamy film—The Extraordinary Caterpillar—at the Roe Jan Library. Amy suggested that the CAC may be interested in co-sponsoring. The vote to sponsor was unanimous. (Do we need Town Board approval for sponsoring? This came up a year or more ago when we wanted to sponsor a speaker series being held by the Town of Taghkanic CAC. Gretchen will ask Mike Dvorchak.)

Printing of CAC reports

Amy recommended that the CAC print out copies of important Hillsdale and CAC documents and make them available for public viewing. For example, the Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Plan, the Multi-jurisdiction Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, and others. Maybe we could have some shelf space at the RoeJan Library.

Paving

Amy reported that the Town Board has approved funding to chip seal Lockwood Road, Pumpkin Hill Road, Willowbrook Lane and Syre Lane.

Amy said that the town now has a rule that a road will remain unpaved only if residents gift sufficient funds to defray the cost of maintaining a dirt road and that all landowners along the road agree to keep the road dirt. A resident on one of the roads is hoping to organize a mediation between affected land and farm owners and town officials.

Comprehensive Plan

At their 17 March meeting, the Town Board is expected to pass a resolution to establish a Comprehensive Plan Committee. The CAC had sent to Jamie some recommended edits to a previous draft of the resolution.

Farm Inventory

We are still working on the list of active farms in Hillsdale. Gretchen will ask Suzanne Werner if her farm is still active. David will consult the registrations listed with the Farm Service Administration. Jamie was going to send us the most recent town budget which includes a list of the properties with tax exemptions.

Garbage Receptacle Law

Amy and Jamie are working on drafting a law requiring that garbage cans be kept indoors except on the day of pick-up.

Training

Jamie was going to provide CAC members with Discrimination/Harassment/Workplace Violence training at this meeting, but was unable to attend, so may do the training at the March CAC meeting.

Tree Planting for Earth Day

Re: The tree offered to municipalities by the Soil and Water Conservation District for Earth Day: We discussed possible locations such as somewhere along Rt 23 in the hamlet, next to the Methodist church where a large elm was recently removed, a conifer at the soldier's monument where it could be permanent Christmas tree, or somewhere at the fire station or the town garage. Jamie might know if the Town Board has discussed any locations. Mary reminded us that the most important parts of a tree planting project are the planting methods and the care and maintenance afterward.

Open Space Plan

Gretchen reported that she has finally been incorporating David's and Amy's edits from last summer, and will soon have a new draft for review by the Open Space Committee. We should ask the Town Board to appoint new members of the Committee because several of the original members are no longer involved with town matters. She will see if this can be added to the agenda for the Town Board's March meeting.

New Business

No new business was discussed.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm.

Action Items

David:

- Ask Robina to forward Ed Frederick's application for the CAC position (and any other applications)

Mary:

- Review farm inventory list
- (carried over) Draft a letter opposing the use of herbicides along roadways, to be sent by the Town Council to our state representatives.
- (carried over) Submit regular reports to the Town Board about EMC activities.

Amy:

- Work with Jamie on the Garbage Receptacle Law
- (carried over) Add to the farm inventory list
- (carried over) With Gretchen, look for sources of funding for culvert replacement and start to gather information needed for 2026 applications

Gretchen:

- Ask Mike Dvorchak if the CAC needs the Town Board's permission to sponsor the showing of a film at the library
- Talk with Richard and Mike about applying for a WQIP grant for culvert replacement in the 2026 round
- Review rat poison article
- Compile list of CAC-related publications to be printed for public viewing
- (carried over) Prepare next draft of the Open Space Plan
- (carried over) With Amy, look for sources of funding for culvert replacement and start to gather information needed for 2026 applications. Confer with Richard Briggs about which culverts to prioritize

All:

- Scan Comprehensive Plans from other towns and consider the kinds of format and content suitable for Hillsdale's revised Plan.
- Consider the kinds of elements that should be included in an RFP for Comprehensive Plan consultants.
- Add to the list of active farms.