

Conservation Advisory Council Town of Hillsdale, NY

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

MINUTES CAC MEETING, 19 MARCH 2026

The meeting was convened at 7:05pm at the Hillsdale Town Hall. All members were present (Amy by phone) after the training was completed). Jamie Carano Nordenstrom (Town Council liaison) was also present.

Approval of Minutes

The February minutes were approved with edits from Amy.

Old Business

CAC Open Position

We have still received no applications.

Culverts

Gretchen will set up a meeting with Mike Dvorchak and Richard Briggs to discuss whether to go after a WQIP grant for culvert replacement.

Hillsdale Town Newsletter

Mary drafted a piece about rat poison. David and Mary have yet to review the version edited by Gretchen.

Sponsor a Film?

Gretchen has asked Mike Dvorchak if we need to have the Town Board's permission to co-sponsor the showing of the Doug Tallamy film—The Extraordinary Caterpillar—at the Roe Jan Library and, if so, could he put that decision on the agenda for the April Town Board meeting. (The March agenda was too full.)

Printing of CAC reports

Gretchen has so far selected these documents to print for public viewing:

- Hillsdale Natural Resources Inventory, 2020
- Hillsdale Groundwater Study 2009
- Hillsdale Road Stream Crossing Study, 2022
- Best Management Practices for Invasive Plants, 2025
- Amphibian Guide (Hudson River Estuary Program)
- Columbia County Multi-jurisdiction Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan

- Columbia County Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan
- Taghkanic Creek Watershed Plan (get copies from the CLC)
- Habitat Fact Sheets (Hudsonia)

Gretchen will obtain cost estimates from local printers.

Paving

Richard Briggs and Mike Dvorchak decided not to engage in mediation with landowners along rural roads.

Comprehensive Plan

Gretchen agreed to draft a letter to the Town Board citing the state law and outlining the best practices for appointing a Comprehensive Plan committee.

Farm Inventory

Jamie said that the 116 agricultural tax exemptions are attached to the 2025 town budget, but Amy has been unable to find them. Jamie will send the list separately. We should show the draft list of operating farms to Rene Gibson and Sally Laing.

Garbage Receptacle Law

Jamie will draft a local law requiring that garbage cans be set out and removed on the day of pick-up, to reduce opportunities for raiding by wildlife.

Training

Jamie walked Mary, David, and Gretchen through the Sexual Harassment and Discrimination and Workplace Violence Prevention Policy training, completing the 2026 training required by the town.

Tree Planting for Earth Day

With recommendations from Jamie and Gretchen, Mike Dvorchak submitted the application to the Columbia County Soil and Water Conservation District for a serviceberry to be planted at the hamlet park as part of Earth Day celebrations.

Open Space Plan

Gretchen asked Mike Dvorchak to include the appointment of Open Space Committee members on the agenda for the next Town Board meeting. He said he would add it to the April meeting agenda.

Gretchen will send the current draft plan to Mary.

New Business

No new business was discussed.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:27pm.

Action Items

David:

- Review draft of rat poison article

Mary:

- Review draft of rat poison article
- 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
- When the farm inventory list is ready, send to Rene Gibson and Sally Laing to review
- (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:

- Send farm inventory list and Open Space Plan draft to Mary.
- Draft a letter to the Town Board about best practices for appointing a Comprehensive Plan committee.
- (carried over) Meet with Richard and Mike about applying for a WQIP grant for culvert replacement in the 2026 round
- (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:

- Prepare for planting the serviceberry on ?Saturday, 18 April.
- (carried over) Scan Comprehensive Plans from other towns and consider the kinds of format and content suitable for Hillsdale's revised Plan.
- (carried over) Consider the kinds of elements that should be included in an RFP for Comprehensive Plan consultants.
- (carried over) Add to the list of active farms.