

Town of Coeymans

Minutes - Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) meeting

12/12/2016

At RCS Community Library - Small Conference room

Present:

Sylvia Lawler (Chair) (SL)
Daniel Bosworth (DB)
Michael McGuire (MM)
Bryan Rowzee (Acting Recording Secretary) (BR)
Joe Tracey (JT)
Ro Woodard (RW)

Also Present:

Barbara Heinzen (BH)
Karen Strong (Biodiversity Program Coordinator - Hudson River Estuary and Watershed Research and Extension) (KS)

Meeting called to order at 6:01 p.m. by SL.

Topics:

Introduction of new members
Presentation by Karen Strong of the Hudson River Estuary Program
Brief Review of Goals

Introduction of new members

SL welcomed two new CAC members attending for the first time: Daniel Bosworth, appointed in October; and Bryan Rowzee, appointed in November by the Coeymans Town Board.

Presentation by Karen Strong

KS provided an background introduction of the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) for the benefit of the CAC members. She noted she is very excited that we are preparing a Natural Resource Inventory. As a CAC, it is useful to have the inventory to inform decisions involving planning and the comprehensive plan.

The Coeymans CAC is attempting to create a customized NRI as a major step in local conservation efforts.

According to the NY State DEC, “an NRI provides a strong foundation for informed land-use planning and decision-making. NRIs also serve as the basis for identifying conservation priorities and strategies like zoning updates, open space protection, or the need for more detailed studies such as wildlife habitat assessment.”

KS elaborated - These help to provide useful data to communities. This includes a narrative summary, maps and tables in order to communicate the data to the wider public. For example, the table of rare species for Coeymans display includes hyperlinked tags for further information. If there is an update for comprehensive plan or zoning the NRI is a powerful tool for decision making. The inventory is a neutral objective document, which can illuminate and guide thoughtful local decision-making. This process can direct and inform public exposure with clear objective facts. Information incorporated in a comprehensive plan and zoning can lead to additional protections. An inventory allows a chance to prioritize. The first step is find the data, we do not need any analysis yet.

In a comment period, BH asserted the NRI would be useful to resurrect the LWRP (Local Waterfront Revitalization Program) and that an inventory can help us protect undeveloped lands.

MM For the planning board, this could be a reference that could make decisions on decisions, subdivisions and projects. This could be a springboard for conservation critical of environment areas, a SEQR designation. He also emphasized the document covered the entire town.

RW broached the topic of the importance knowing what is environmentally sensitive and are there objective legal determinations that we can use?

KS responded that the benefit of the NRI is that it covers the whole town and allows a comparative analysis of priorities and connections to legal definitions.

The habitat summary lists State flagged endangered, threatened with legal protection including requiring a permit from DEC to develop the noted property. The habitat summary is a start to the NRI.

KS Added that maps should be annotated to maximize impact and help citizens make logical objective connections and understand context. She also warned the CAC to beware scope creep, so that our

project goals and materials are not overwhelming. She also reported that Hudson is starting the NRI process at this same time.

SL recommended considering the Town of Rosendale NRI for a comparison.

Action Item	Responsible party	Due date
Review habitat summary and provide feedback to the group	All CAC members	1-10-2017 (next meeting)

Action Item	Responsible party	Due date
Report status of finding map components that will help us generate a Natural Resource Inventory.	All CAC members with specific assignments noted below grouped by resource types	1-10-2017
Geology and Soils; Climate conditions and projections	Mike McGuire	1-10-2017
Water Resources	Sylvia Lawler and Dan Bosworth	1-10-2017
Habitats and Wildlife	Joseph Tracey and Barbara Heinzen	1-10-2017
Cultural Resources	Ro Woodard	1-10-2017
Land Use	Bryan Rowzee	1-10-2017

Brief Review of Goals

SL highlighted a few goals stating We would like to have input from local business including industry. Outreach is critical for information gathering and education. We would like to get high school students involved. She also referred CAC members to the list of Long term and short term goals created at the November 1, 2016 meeting

Next Meeting 6 p.m. on January 10, 2017 at RCS Community Library - Small Conference room

Motion to Adjourn MM, Second JT
Approved 6 – 0

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

- Minutes compiled by Bryan Rowzee (Acting Recording Secretary)