

Conservation Advisory Council, Town of New Lebanon, New York

Minutes for September 14, 2020, monthly meeting at the Pavilion in Shatford Park

Attending: CAC members Jenna Barbary, Cynthia Creech, David Farren, Robert Gilson, Steve Powers, Paul Rix and guest Steven Winkley, New York Rural Water Association

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 P.M due to Steve Winkley's late arrival. The minutes of the CAC monthly meeting on August 10, 2020, were approved and will be sent to the Town Clerk for posting.

Source Water Study: Steve Winkley did not bring his laptop and was unable to share the maps he has been working on. He outlined the New York State Department of Health's 5-year program to test residential wells. Due to his work in New Lebanon, the town is on their radar. Depending on the history of a site, NYSDOH would test for coliform bacteria, synthetic organic compounds, and volatile organic compounds. It may or may not test for PFOA. The test would be a good basic test that tells private well owners what is going on in their water.

Paul Rix said that homeowners commonly test their wells for volatile organic compounds. With this program, the results would take two weeks and would be confidential between NYSDOH and the homeowner. Paul suggested that the town be divided into five zones for the study and that we approach homeowners proactively to request the test and share the results with the town. Steve Winkley suggested that testing could be based on geology or on a history of possible contaminants.

David Farren noted that the ravine bordering Pool Hill Road in Lebanon Springs was once full of barrels dumped there over many years by the County Highway Department's New Lebanon supervisor, who lived nearby. Paul St. Germain, the owner of the cool ravines further east, had to clean them out before he was granted a deeded right of way into his property. Cynthia noted that water from the spring has e-coli and wondered if it would be possible to filter the water. Paul asked if we could apply for a grant to test for PFOA.

All of Steve Winkley's maps will be available online, some cloud-based and others on paper. The maps can be overlaid to create context. Paul asked Steve how he is researching the history and he responded that he is trying to learn where landfills and waste sites are located. Steve noted that he hasn't mapped every well in New Lebanon and that the Land Use Office might have a more comprehensive map.

PFOA: Paul said that there was not a lot to report. Everyone has received their results. Tim Lambert received a negative result. Joy Sherman, who owns the trailer park, has not shared information. He noted that the money the County gave for cleanup is not technically earmarked to cap the landfill but rather compensation for the County's use of the landfill during its life. The original estimate for the cleanup of \$1.35 million is surely now considerably more. Steve Winkley noted that the fact the landfill is on private land complicates the question of who pays for the capping. New Lebanon seems to have been a low priority for the State so it's good we're now on their radar.

CAC Link on the Town Website: There has not been an answer as to when the CAC link will be restored. The NRCP, meeting minutes, annual reports and useful links continue to be unavailable.

Budget: Cynthia believes the CAC will get the \$960 we asked for in the 2021 town budget. She mentioned that, given the pandemic, public programs are not the way to go.

Trees for Tribs: Carole Roseman applied for and was awarded a second phase of up to 95 tree seedlings for fall planting. Trees for Tribs prefers dense plantings along the riparian corridor. David will enlist volunteers. He is working with the Town Supervisor to apply for a spring planting project in Shatford Park. The Summer Recreation Program campers would be able to help with maintenance during the heat of the summer.

Planning Board update: Bob Gilson reported on the Planning Board Meeting.

- Nokomis' alcove was approved. They are looking to build a 5,000 square foot Education Center on their property. Originally, students at Mountain Road School were to use their proposed building but that is no longer the case. Steve Powers and David had identified Wadsworth Road as a scenic road. It is narrow with limited sight lines and has a number of sharp, blind elbow turns.
- The laundromat is on hold while the requirement to build a new septic system is assessed.
- Paul asked about the Site Plan Review process. Cynthia responded that the Planning Board would like to slim the process down. An approach could be for a new business similar in scope locating in an existing space to dispense with site plan review. David noted that if there is no site plan review on file for that location there would still need to be one, or at least an inventory.

The **Hudson River Estuary Program** will be holding an online 3-day webinar on wetlands, September 21-23. David is registered and will take notes. Cynthia is waitlisted.

November Town Newsletter submission: Should we submit something by the October 19 deadline? The consensus was not at this time.

Local Laws 2 & 3: Steve Powers and Cynthia agreed that there's really nothing in SEQR to respond to. David will convey this to the Town Supervisor. Cynthia said that if there is ever a problem defining whether a place is legitimately a farm, it would be best to use the State Ag & Markets definitions. She had hoped to include something about non-commercial farms. At the moment, there is no protection for/from non-commercial farms.

Update on CAC's Goals in 2020:

- It looks like the *Water Study* can proceed now that we can rely, at least in part, on the NYSDOH program to test private wells over the next five years.
- *Cool Ravines* as our first Critical Environmental Area will be a priority once the Town Board resumes in-person meetings.
- The updated Scenic Resources inventory and map in the *Natural Resources Conservation Plan* has not been available on the town's website. Columbia Land Conservancy had hoped to include New Lebanon in a self-guided, county-wide scenic tour.

Business Economic Development Committee: Cynthia reported that the Committee has discussed encouraging businesses that don't require heavy water use to consider opening in the Routes 20/22 corridor.

Climate Smart Committee update:

- Steve Powers said that they had a great day at the Farmer's Market on Sunday. They passed out literature on composting and Marc Anthonisen promoted composting at the Community Garden. Jenna's video is still not up on the website due to problems with the site.

- They also gave away a bike that Marc and Moy Wong had restored for the Free Store. Everyone who gets a bike has to sign a waiver, absolving the Town and the Free Store of liability.
- Marc is developing a proposal with his advisor for Cornell University MPA students to work on projects for the Town of New Lebanon during summers.
- The CSC plans to do a Fleet Inventory for vehicles owned by the Highway Department.
- Bruce Shenker has asked the Town Board to discuss Community Solar at its next meeting.

Comprehensive Plan Update Committee: Cynthia Creech has participated in two focus groups as the recorder. Although only one farmer showed up for the agriculture focus group, it was a good meeting. Five other focus groups are for business owners (2), seniors (2) and outdoor enthusiasts. The groups have addressed the town's natural resources obliquely. A consistent theme has been that people would like to conserve New Lebanon's rural aspects and its scenic beauty.

Zoning Rewrite Committee: Regulations for short term rentals are being discussed. At a public forum, certain property owners said that they should be able to do what they want with a home they own. They would not acknowledge that accepting payment for services is a business, or at least one that should be regulated. In order to prevent problems with absentee landlords, a proposed solution is that a reliable person live within 20 miles of the rental to address any maintenance issues.

The next meeting will be October 12, 2020, at 6:30 P.M. We agreed to meet via GoogleMeet.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Robert Gilson