

CAC Meeting, October 3, 2022 Minutes

Attending via Zoom: CAC members Jamie, Choral, David, Jane, Jono, Kim, Amy, Colleen, Jay, Erin. And Jayelle, Planning Board Clerk attended. Meeting commenced at 7:00pm. Colleen and Jayelle had to leave for Zoning Board meeting at 7:30

The meeting began with a very brief discussion of the possibility of David and Jane acting as co-chairs of CAC once Jamie resigns from that post (but not from the CAC!) at the end of the year. The co-chairs will alternate chairing the meeting and whoever is not chairing, will take minutes. We will ask the Town Board to approve this change at the organizational meeting in January 2023.

To take advantage of Jayelle's attendance until 7:30, and Colleen's need to leave as well, we did our best to have a discussion of our relations with the Planning Board and how best to support their efforts to better address environmental concerns on applications.

Planning Board Concerns:

We had a far-ranging discussion about issues regarding the Planning Board and environmental issues. Drawing on experiences with the Bottletree and Velasquez applications, it is clear that improvements need to be made in getting the Planning Board to follow zoning laws, including latest revisions, when it comes to environmental concerns. And we need to see improvements in enforcements of Planning Board requirements once made. In the case of the Bottletree, the PB ignored our concerns, especially about setbacks from streams. With Velasquez, not only were our concerns ignored, but the applicant does not seem to be abiding by restrictions imposed by the PB, especially regarding erosion and the driveway.

There was recognition that the PB has much improved on several of our concerns raised in our memo, including timeliness of sharing materials required of applicants and getting minutes circulated in a timely manner. We also very much appreciate Jayelle's willingness to attend many of our meetings and share her experiences in working with applicants, consultants and the Board.

We agreed that the most important move the PB and TB can make is to ensure that the town's consultants available to the PB (at this point, Nan and George) be involved from the beginning on all projects that have environmental concerns. To this point, there was discussion on what should trigger their involvement: the Type 1 List, need for a SWIPPP, building in the Scenic Overlay Zone, or other? There is a need to decide on how to pay for this additional input which could possibly be through escrow accounts paid for by the applicants, or by the town. The PB and TB need to decide on an equitable way of dealing with this—based on size of project or the likely environmental impacts.

There followed a discussion of how to better enforce our zoning laws and how the PB, or other body, can better oversee projects once construction has started. We should determine how the town, and CAC in particular, can support our zoning enforcement officer in doing their job. And we need to find out if there is some other way of ensuring enforcement, perhaps through engineer's review and not closing out permits unless the applicant is in compliance.

There was consensus to see what happens on regular consultant review at the Oct 6 PB meeting, follow this topic closely, and write a letter to the PB and TB in favor of consultant review if necessary. Also, Erin agreed to suggest to the PB that a resolution on how to implement regular consultant review be taken to the Town Board for their approval. J. Hoffman was inclined to think that there would be PB progress on this topic.

Jay will revise/update his memo on the Velasquez project. And we will send it to the Planning Board for their review.

Watershed Characterization:

Amy, Colleen and Jay attended this first meeting about the Punchbrook watershed along with good representation and participation from neighboring towns. It was a well-organized beginning, and Jamie indicated that it is setting a template for the Roe Jan group to follow.

Drought Article:

We discussed the continued relevance of this subject and the fact that the town newsletter is in late stages of preparation, so we will go forward in updating our memo and suggesting illustrations. We will also suggest that Cathy include a paragraph on the successful attempt to get funding for Kennedy to do a study on Ancram's water supply. David will update our memo.

Columbia County Climate Smart Community/CAC Roundtable to take place in Hudson on October 20. Several of us indicated a willingness to attend, but we want to look into any COVID restrictions since it is an indoor meeting.

The meeting ended with a much smaller group, as there was attrition due to difficulties rejoining Zoom twice due to time restraints. Meeting adjourned at 8:30.

Next CAC meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 7, 2022.