

Minutes of the CAC meeting on Dec 12, 2023

Attending via Zoom: Wally Williamson, Jamie Purinton, Colleen Lutz, Amy Gold, Choral Eddie, Jane Meigs, Jonathan Meigs

The November minutes were approved.

Jane will resend the CAC letter on the DEC wetland pool permit to Ed Ferrato.

Planning Board projects needing CAC input: There do not appear to be any notable projects needing CAC input currently before the PB. We did discuss the poor sound quality of the zoom for the PB meetings. Amy recommended that the town tech group needs to make improvements to the sound quality and placement of the camera. Colleen noted that new PB members would benefit from more training on interpreting the zoning law.

SCOZ revisions update: Jane described the note from Hugh Clark that outlined ZRC concerns including extending SCOZ regulations to “all development. Also, the middle section needs to be rewritten to make the development standards clearer and less redundant. Jane will write to Hugh and share the CAC concerns on the Velazquez project, and Erin has agreed to rewrite the middle section of our proposed revisions.

Grant for Invasive Species Education: Our application for funds for the invasive species project at CLC’s Overmountain site is submitted. Colleen suggested a few more places that might fund this project in case we do receive the original grant.

Continued discussion of steps involved in creating a Community Preservation Plan and Fund: There was unanimous agreement that Gretchen Stevens would be an excellent consultant and guide for this project. Jane will contact Gretchen Stevens to see if she will agree to be our consultant. This will be a long term project. It made sense to us that we could begin by reviewing our foundational documents and then start work on an Open Space Plan for Ancram with Gretchen’s guidance. Since one third of Ancram is already protected, we would look for and designate ecological sites that are not currently well represented in protected areas.

Here is a very brief schematic of how our work on this project may progress:

Review NRCP and other foundation documents

Develop an Open Space Plan

OSP becomes an Open Space Inventory once OSP is approved by Town Board

Go on to create the CPP and CPF

We agreed that there is value in completing a OSP even if we do not move on to creating a CPP and CPF. Gretchen is happy to share Hillsdale's OSP with us once it is completed. Jane will contact Art about funding for hiring Gretchen once we have an estimate from her.

Jane and Jono had a good phone conversation with Christine Vanderlan who offered to attend one of our CAC meetings to answer our questions and explain details of organizing for a Community Preservation Plan and Community Preservation Fund which would allow for a real estate transfer tax to preserve designated sites in Ancram. Christine will get back to us about how affordable housing projects may relate to the CPP and CPF.

State grant for Forest Conservation: We tabled this project for another meeting.

Jane asked that everyone send brief notes on any conservation professional training in 2023 so that this information can be included in our Annual Report.

Holiday Party on Friday, Dec 15 at 6:00pm Choral suggested that we take a covid test before the party, and we all agreed to do so.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm. **Next CAC meeting is Tuesday, Jan 9.** If either Gretchen or Christine can meet with us on that date, we will meet in person at the Town Hall.