

Minutes of CAC meeting on March 12, 2024-

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

Approval of Feb 13 minutes.

Discussion of an Open Space Plan for Ancram

Gretchen Stevens attended our meeting to offer advice on creating an Open Space Plan (OSP) for Ancram. An OSP would identify the most valuable areas for conservation in Ancram. These can be scenic and historic places and parks as well as environmental areas. If an OSP is approved by the Town Board, then a CAC can become a CAB which means that the PB has to involve the CAC on any proposed project. Ancram's NRCP describes important areas for conservation but does not prioritize them. An OSP would do that. An OSP can be brief and concise, and we can refer to and use the environmental content in the NRCP. The Hillsdale OSP identified four priorities for conservation including water resources, biodiversity, farmland and scenic views. We need to decide similar priorities for Ancram.

In the OSP, we would delineate the highest conservation priority areas on maps, but we do not have to be specific about individual parcels until the OSP is passed by the Town Board. Once the OSP is passed, we create an Open Space Inventory or Index which is more specific. An OSP is an educational and planning document for the town. It is voluntary and makes recommendations. It is not mandatory. We want to identify high priority areas without alienating property owners.

We will form an OSP Advisory Group which can include members of the CAC as well as other key community members, such as PB and TB members, former TB members and local experts. An OSP is to be an inclusive document with input from all community members early in the process so that it will be well received.

As a way to streamline the process and to get community participation, Jamie suggested that we use the six conservation areas from the NRCP as a structure for open meetings/working groups where everyone is invited to

offer input into identifying key spots for conservation in each area. We would need to run these open meetings twice to ensure that interested people could contribute.

Gretchen suggested that we write a one-page introductory memo for the TB, explaining what an OSP is and its value and benefits to the town. This memo would also give an overview of those areas of the town that are conservation priorities and describe who would be on the OSP Advisory Group. We will ask for Town funds to pay Gretchen and note that CAC members will be applying for grants as well. Wally noted the valuable discussion on OSPs in the NYS Dept of State OSP planning guide as an excellent resource.

SCOZ revisions update—We worked on getting appropriate zoning law language to extend SCOZ protections to single-family and two-family dwellings. Jane wrote a memo to Erin Robertson and Carol Falcetti on this subject. We also looked in the zoning law for a list of the types of projects that would require a full site plan review and recommended that buildings and projects in the SCOZ be included on this list. With our input, Erin and Carol are working on a final SCOZ revision which addresses ZRC questions to be presented to the ZRC in April.

Invasive Species Education Grant- Colleen will be taking the lead on this project along with CLC. The project is due for completion by March 2026. Colleen presented an educational kiosk and brush station example. Jamie suggested that we get graphics input from other designers.

Ancram Newsletter—Jono has submitted an article on *Rethinking Lawns* for the spring newsletter. Jane will forward his article to the CAC.

Meeting opened at 6:30pm and adjourned at 8:30pm. **Next CAC meeting is Tuesday, April 9 via zoom.**