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## Town of Knox Conservation Advisory Council

### Meeting Notes July 22, 2025

Attending: Eric Marczak, Rick Georgeson, Nelson Kent, Amy Lauterbach

Absent: Dave Nelson

Eric opened the meeting at 6:33 PM.

#### Housekeeping

- Eric moved and Nelson seconded to approve the June 24 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.
- Eric and Rick have completed the harassment training program for 2025. They commented that it seems to be oriented toward NYC issues and requirements.

#### Education and Outreach

##### Map Library (for Open Space Inventory)

- We will get map updates from the Farmland Protection Plan project when they are available
- A survey to gather information about the characteristics of private wells in town will help with our natural resources inventory mapping.

##### Conservation Planning

- The final draft of the grant application for the farmland protection plan is underway.
- After 30 years, the comprehensive plan needs to be updated.

##### Biosolids

- Dan McCoy's office sent an acknowledgment of the note Russ sent him to express appreciation and support for his efforts on this issue.

##### Water Supply

- Paul Tonko's office provided information on grants and other funding sources that could help Knox establish a new backup water supply to supplement wells that dry up in drought conditions or that are otherwise compromised.
  - Grants are available for emergency water supply planning and infrastructure. One requires that past drought conditions have been demonstrated for two years. We may need to search for documentation of the 2024 summer drought. Summer of 2023 was uncharacteristically wet.
- We discussed surveying residents to learn more about their wells: water quality, quantity, depth, changes in water quality, history of problems, etc.

- Survey residents about their private wells by mail and online link via emails, newsletter and Enterprise:
  - Ask about depth of the well
  - Productivity of the well
  - Taste of the water
  - Whether or not they filter or treat their water
  - If so, for what problem? Hardness? (what minerals? Sulfur? Bacteria? Gas? Other problems?)
  - How many times and when has your well gone dry?
  - How many people use your water supply?
- Contribute our findings to the Farmland Protection Plan.
- Eric is drafting a presentation he would like to make to the town board to solicit their support for the CAC working on an emergency water supply for the town. He previewed it with the CAC members.
  - We'll discuss Eric's proposed presentation to the town board at our next CAC meeting.
  - Eric will list benefits, consequences of inaction, economic impacts, property values, tourism, recreation, agriculture, ...
    - Breweries and? distilleries favor limestone water.
    - Tourism opportunities including birding events, glamping, B&Bs
      - Events for fossil hunters
        - Geology students at RPI visit the Schoharie rock quarry and mine.
        - Old road cuts and old quarries are of interest to geologists, fossil hunters
      - How to keep youth on the hill after high school
        - How to connect youth with summer jobs – as guides, farm workers, ...
    - Eric referenced the recent Times Union article about a Skidmore study of the effects of salting roadways near Saratoga Lake.
  - Eric will outline expert testimony, case studies and examples of other municipal solutions, historic information, and the current state of our water supplies.
    - Perhaps Tom Engel could help us understand the town's water resources.
      - Our only recharge source is rain and snow melt. We have no large aquifer, only scattered small ones.
      - What is the recharge source for Thompson's Lake? Its outflow proceeds underground into Warner's Lake.
      - Local well drillers can tell us about water resources in this area.
        - Nelson will contact Tony (Dick) Ferraioli.
        - Mark Lawrence could be a resource.
      - Trout Unlimited has documented lower flow, warmer water and diminished insect population leading to less trout habitat.
    - Eric told of a 1899 historical account of Susan Whipple referencing the unreliable water sources Knox residents experienced.
    - Dick Dexter and Lou Saddlemire have recounted that fire trucks would deliver water to folks whose wells were compromised by drought conditions.
  - Brainstorm ideas:
    - Develop something like A1 water supply on Route 7

- Jay Francis has an artesian well on his property in the southwest corner of Knox. (Rock Road Chapel also houses a Red Cross emergency shelter and a food pantry.) Another is between Saddlemire Road and Street Road, draining into the town park wetland. Other similar geological features may exist elsewhere in the town. There is another artesian well (two miles southwest as the crow flies) behind the senior center at 1360 Route 443 in Berne.
- If a water source qualifies as a public water supply, it can benefit from free semi-annual water quality tests by the state.
  - We could ask a representative from A1 to speak with us at a CAC meeting.
    - Eric will contact A1 representatives about speaking to us.
  - Nelson has a contact who is a hydrogeologist who might offer insights into how a suitable well site could be located in Knox.
    - He may help us understand how much an assessment might cost.
- Offer separate solutions for drinking water and utility water for bathing, washing clothes, etc.
  - Promote water conservation measures
    - Domestic water conservation measures: front loader washing machines, faucet aerators, low flow toilets
  - Retention/irrigation ponds for farmers
- Any anticipated expenses should be planned for in next year's (2026) town budget. Requests for funding should go to the supervisor in late August or early September.

#### Wetlands Boardwalk

- The plank walkway at the wetlands is getting overgrown with vegetation, so we'll stop by to do some trimming.

#### Local Recreational Resources

- The kiosk for the Long Path connector is under construction near the old Key Bank in Altamont.

#### Other Discussion

- Contamination of the Watervliet Reservoir may be due to its proximity to golf courses and their use of chemicals for lawn maintenance.

Amy motioned to adjourn, Nelson seconded and the meeting concluded at 7:45 PM.

The next CAC meeting is planned for 6:30 PM on Tuesday, August 26.

Submitted by Amy Lauterbach