

Attending: Eric Marczak, Nelson Kent, Amy Lauterbach, Dave Nelson and guest Rick Georgeson

Eric opened the meeting at 7:30 PM.

#### Housekeeping

- Eric made a motion to approve the November 19 meeting minutes. Nelson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- Amy will ask Russ to provide the Harassment Training link for all CAC members in January.
- Rick has agreed to join the CAC at the beginning of the new year.
- The group agreed to change the meeting start time to 7:00 PM beginning in January.

#### Education and Outreach

- Ideas for a public event in the spring could include kids' activities, wildlife rehabilitators (eagle and crow), guided bird walks, food vendors (Greek and Indian) and ACS&WCD to provide water testing kits, possibly on June 22.
- Rick drafted a letter to the editor of the Enterprise to describe the CAC's mission and activities. It is being fine tuned.
- Amy will ask Brigitte about the survey questions she developed.

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

- Nelson got a list of maps from Susan Lewis that are available from the Albany County Soil & Water Conservation District.
- Eric has a map from USDA that he will email to CAC members and Betty Ketcham.
- Eric, Nelson and Evan Taylor (from the Agricultural Advisory Committee) will compile questions for the professional planner who will be hired to prepare the Farmland Protection Plan.
- Our contributions to map updates could be local information about small wetlands, karst features, etc.

#### Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs)

##### Wetlands Boardwalk

- Eric has replaced the notebook for guests to sign in. He will compile visitor statistics for 2024.
- The water level is back up to the level it was at when we built the plank walkway.
  - We will need a 6" X 6" X ?' post to support a sign for the Wetland similar to that at the Winn Preserve.
  - Amy will send photos of the new bridges in the town park to CAC members.

##### Other Discussion

- The draft annual report was reviewed. Eric moved to accept it with corrections, Nelson seconded and all approved. Amy will send it to Traci and the Town Board.
- Long Path trail extension from Thacher Park down to Leesome Lane: Project leader Steve Siegard had shoulder surgery, so work is suspended until Spring. They are getting landowner agreements finalized for the section below Leesome Lane to the Village of Altamont. Dave and Nelson have worked on this project.
- Grand Opening festivities for the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy's expanded Bozenkill Preserve will be held on Saturday, December 21.
- We will ask New Scotland to keep us informed of their work on fertilizer made from municipal sludge.
- Amy will send the local law about toxic discharges into waterways to members.

Amy motioned to adjourn, Eric seconded and the meeting concluded at 8:52 PM.

The next regularly scheduled CAC meeting is planned for 7:00 PM on Tuesday, January 21.

## Selected Definitions in the new Solar Law (Local Law #1 of 2024):

- **ACTIVE AGRICULTURAL LAND:** A parcel of land greater than seven (7) acres that was used for farming, agriculture, or nursery within five (5) years of the date the application is filed with the Town for a Large-Scale Solar Energy System. Agricultural uses include, but are not limited to, the production of crops, hay, livestock, and livestock products. Active Agricultural Land does not include gardens and crops intended solely for personal use, or consumption by, the property owner or tenant.
- **AGRIVOLTAICS:** The sustainable land-use strategy that permits the installation of solar energy systems alongside agricultural practices, ensuring that agricultural activities remain the primary use of the land. This dual use of land enhances the productivity and health of agricultural operations while allowing for the generation of renewable energy through the integration of a solar energy system designed in a manner that prioritizes agricultural needs and sustains the local food systems, aligning with community renewable energy objectives.
- **CANOPY TREE:** Any tree or other woody plant that when fully grown will provide shade and/or shelter for the land beneath while allowing passage of people, animals, and/or vehicles upon the land beneath.
- **HIGH QUALITY WETLAND:** A wetland that performs most of the following functions to a high degree: ground water recharge, ground water discharge, flood storage, sediment retention, shore line anchoring, water quality improvement, wildlife habitat, food chain support, and fish habitat.
- **MATURE FOREST:** Mature forests are the stage of forest development immediately before old growth. The features that mark the transition from an immature to mature forest are unique to each forest type, underscoring the complexity of defining mature and old-growth forests. In general, one (1) acre or more of fully stocked forest land with a minimum mean stand diameter of 16 inches at breast height. Stocking levels are to be determined using a stocking guide appropriate for the Forest type. Refer to the Bureau of Land Management for further definition on forest type.
- **PRIME FARMLAND:** Prime Farmland Soils (622.04) a. Definition. Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and that is available for these uses. It has the combination of soil properties, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops in an economic manner if it is treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.
- **SOLAR GRAZING:** The sustainable land-use practice that primarily focuses on the operation of solar energy installations while incorporating livestock grazing as a secondary benefit. In this practice, livestock such as sheep or goats are used to manage vegetation around and beneath solar panels, offering a natural and efficient way to maintain the land. This approach supports renewable energy generation while also providing the added benefit of agricultural activity, contributing to the efficient use of land and aligning with local energy and agricultural goals.
- **VISUAL IMPACT ANALYSIS/VIEWSHED ANALYSIS:** The analysis of the potential visual impacts to the landscape and landscape views resulting from a proposed development or land management action.