

Conservation Advisory Council  
Meeting Minutes of January 28, 2014 Meeting  
Village Hall

*Chairperson Robert Liebman called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.*

Members present:

Chairperson Robert Liebman  
Alison Bisbano

Minutes:

Ideas for activities, projects, etc.

Alison: The CAC can facilitate training of citizens for jobs related to the Comprehensive Development Plan. The CAC can facilitate training members of the community in subjects of the Comprehensive Development Plan so later the citizens can have jobs that carry out what is stated in the plan.

Bob: Who would be the person training?

Alison: We can look into resources.

Bob: Is there a cost?

Alison: Minimal to start because the idea is in the planning phase.

Bob: Are these environmentally oriented jobs?

Alison: Yes.

Bob: The Comprehensive Development Plan does not cover climate change, it is more written for protecting water. There currently is a governor's economic meeting going on.

Alison: We can try to find out what happened in the governor's economic meeting. Another idea is to make sure the Natural Resource Inventory is updated.

Bob: We would need local experts to update the Natural Resource Inventory. I would not budget at this point on the Natural Resource Inventory. We can do research first and look into other CACs and see what they have done. The website of Somers or Lewisboro has a Natural Resource Inventory.

Alison: My next idea is to make sure the Open Space Inventory is updated.

Bob: That involves a computer and a GPS (Global Positioning System).

Alison: Some other thoughts to mention are that we can organize an activity with a high school environmental club or ask college students who are interested in local government and the environment to complete an organized project for academic credit.

Bob: We cannot run anything with academic credit, however we can use interns. My ideas are more along the lines of advising the Village. The first idea I have is to attend the NYSACC (New York State Association of Conservation Commissions) conference and do a report on it. NYSACC has a list of every CAC. NYSACC hosts an annual conference on the environment every fall. The location changes every year.

We reviewed the 2012 document of the conference and looked at the three tracks or talks held. We reviewed the 2009 document of the conference and looked at the three tracks or talks held. We reviewed the 2011 document of the conference.

Bob: We can write a report on the NYSACC conference and give it to the Village and post the report on the website. Some reasons for attending the conference and writing a report on it are to provide Mount Kisco with information on what other towns are doing, to educate ourselves on environmental issues, to network with other CACs, to increase credibility on environmental matters within the Mount Kisco government, and it provides an opportunity for individuals to join a NYSACC committee.

Bob: My second idea relates to the STAR Community Rating System. STAR stands for Sustainability Tools for Assessing & Rating Communities. ICLEI is involved. This rating system offers towns an opportunity to participate in it. I told Jim Palmer about it. I started writing a presentation. The rating system offers help with the Vision Plan. The Village can become certified in the STAR Community Rating System. The website is: <http://www.starcommunities.org/>. The Village would need recertification after three years.

Alison: I am interested in the STAR Community Rating System for the Village.

The STAR Community Rating System may be used to update the Vision Plan.

Bob: We need to give a power point presentation to the Village Board to let them know the STAR Community Rating System exists.

#### Budget for next fiscal year

Bob: The deadline is March 1, 2014. An item where we need a budget is \$75 for annual NYSACC dues. The LEAP money does not exist anymore. We may want to pay a local expert later, though at this point we need to work out the details. By law CACs need to write an annual report. We do not need a budget for writing the annual report.

Alison: Thus, we come to the conclusion that we do not need to ask for a budget at this point, only for the NYSACC conference.

Bob: The NYSACC conference requires a budget. We may also want to think about budgeting for possible small supply items. If the Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) would like to become a Conservation Board (CB) then CBs get to review Planning Board documents. If I were to choose between updating the Open Space Inventory (OSI) and updating the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) I would choose the NRI.

#### Strategies for expanding membership of CAC

Bob: Members are required to be a citizen of the Village of Mount Kisco. Typically members do site visits. We can look for people at the Village Board meetings. If people are interested they will look at the agendas and minutes. David Matsil's CAC website is expiring and David asked Jim Palmer if the Village wants to renew the website. Jim forwarded the message to Bob and he responded by saying that it did not matter but if David would like to work on the website he can discuss that with the CAC. Right now the link is down. The CAC will wait to see if David is interested in renewing the website. A good way to keep citizens interested in the CAC is to keep the agendas and meeting minutes updated on the mountkisco.org website.

Alison: I think we can think about recruiting one new member down the line.

Bob: State law requires three to nine members.

Alison: Suzanne Grant is a CAC member as well. We can ask people if they would be interested in becoming an associate member. We can ask people if they have an interest in the environment and what they studied in school.

Bob: We can look for retired individuals as potential members. Alison will write the minutes, we can approve them at our next meeting, and then we will post them to the Mount Kisco website.

#### Discuss key aspects of Conservation Advisory Councils and Boards. A Guide to the Organization and Operation of Local Environmental Advisory Councils from Westchester County Department of Planning (revised 1997)

Alison: Conducting research is a key aspect. I can email Bob the final notes on this guide.

Bob: The website is good for public relations. The town would start up the STAR rating system. The notes that Alison has done on the Guide may be used as a handout for new members.

#### Planning Board Item – The Hearth at Mount Kisco (formerly called Westchester Residence and Club) – 270 Kisco Avenue – Steep slopes permit and wetlands permit – Scientific research on impacts of building roads in wetland buffers

Bob: We have a first draft for wetlands permit comments. We are working on research for steep slope permit comments. The Planning Board Agenda now has one additional proposal. The proposal is the Boys and Girls Club of Northern Westchester is selling their open space property. Part of the property will be housing lots and the other part of the property will be recreational facilities. The applicant will need steep slope permits and subdivision permits. The subdivision permit is needed when applicants divide one lot into multiple ownerships. The people who live on Laurel Drive and the Boys and Girls Club would like the properties to fit into and be like the properties on Laurel Drive.

The CAC may need to write steep slope comments for this project.

*The meeting adjourned at 9:15 P.M.*

Respectfully submitted by,

Alison Bisbano