

Minutes of Meeting of the Environmental Commission (CCE) March 19, 2019

Present: Wendy Whetsel, Patricia Grove, Friedel Muller-Landau, Eileen Reilly, Julie Ruben, Michael Usai, with Karen Doyle (Hudson Highlands Land Trust)

Meeting began at 5:06pm. The minutes from the CCE meeting of February 26th were accepted. The minutes of the CCE project review meeting of March 5th are pending.

Natural Resources Inventory (NRI):

—Karen Doyle brought 2 flash drives containing all Putnam Valley NRI data, including the map packages. She explained that one drive is to go to the Town to be shared with the Town Planner, and one drive is for the CCE. Karen then gave the CCE's drive to Michael Usai as the Chair of the CCE. Mike passed the drive to Pat Grove as keeper of our NRI documents. She will copy the drive and bring this to our next meeting, where CCE members can bring their laptops and load the information themselves.

—The Town Board will be asked to adopt/accept the NRI at the Town Board Meeting of March 20th. Several of us plan to attend.

—Once the NRI is adopted, Karen will oversee the printing of 4 complete copies for the following: The Town Clerk, the Planning Board, The Library, and the CCE. Any CCE member can have copies printed on their own from the PDF (NRI PDF 3.15) at a far lower price than the previously quoted \$60.

—Karen will deliver to Town Hall a packet of maps that include parcels.

—As the group discussed possible next steps regarding the NRI, Karen described the Open Space Inventory (OSI) that another community, one that the Hudson Highlands Land Trust (HHLT) has been working with, has undertaken. Granting from the NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program would be possible; the HHLT is a potential Project Manager. An independent planner would be hired. The work would include identifying Priority Resource Areas (PRAs), hopefully with significantly greater community involvement than we had for the NRI. According to NY State law, once we've produced an NRI and an OSI we can produce an open space index to be accepted by the Town, making the CCE eligible to become a Conservation Board.

Coordinating with the Planning Board:

—Mike Usai reported that both Tom Patterson (Planning Board) and Bruce Barber (Wetlands Inspector/Town Planner) have accepted an invitation to attend a CCE meeting, but won't do so until May.

—Friedel Muller-Landau pointed out that decisions can be made by various Town boards that may impact the environment, but do not appear on the CCE's radar.

An example he offered was a request made for a solo streetlight that resulted in light pollution on a neighboring property.

—Pat cited The Town Code (144-6. Permit Applications-D), noting that the CCE is supposed to receive all applications for waivers to allow comment. Pat offered to send pertinent sections of the Town Code to CCE members.

Communicating with Town Residents:

—Pat observed that many groups in the town make reports and announcements at Town Meetings, and the CCE should as well. Wendy Whetsel affirmed that we should all attend Town Board meetings, and that a CCE member be designated to give reports on our work.

—Pat suggested a Facebook page for the CCE. All concurred, with several members noting how the CCE web page on the Town site is very difficult to access. Pat offered to set up a FB page with all of us as administrators; she will curate the comments from the public. *[Note: she has done so; our Facebook group is Putnam Valley Commission for the Conservation of the Environment]*

—Mike offered to write up an Eco tip on light pollution.

—Pat suggested we organize a Town cleanup day to coincide with Earth Day (April 22nd). She reported problems that a prior CCE had encountered in leading such an activity several years ago: who will provide supplies, including collection bags, collection sticks, gloves, safety vests, and bag disposal? The County had provided bags but not pick-up, nor did the Highway department.

—It was agreed we would begin by asking Town residents to recognize Earth Day by organizing cleanup efforts themselves; with their neighbors, co-workers, community groups, etc.

—Julie Ruben offered to contact Lauri Taylor from the County to request supplies. She was tasked with presenting this initiative at the Town Board meeting on March 20th. *[Note: she has done so and Lauri says there is a good possibility we can get bags from the County]*

—Eileen Reilly will make contact with the PV High School to investigate recruiting students, particularly if there is an Environmental Club.

—Mike will email Sam Oliverio to inform him that Julie will be making this announcement.

Climate Smart Communities:

—Eileen reported on the presentation on Climate Smart Communities Initiative at Putnam County Legislators Health Committee on 3/18/19. Wendy said that Ina Cholst, whom the CCE had designated to pursue the possibility of Putnam Valley becoming a Climate Smart Community, had been supported in this role by Supervisor Oliverio.

NEXT MEETINGS:

April 2nd CCE Project Review Meeting

April 16th CCE General Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Ruben

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