

## Minutes of the July 16, 2019, Meeting of the Putnam Valley Commission for the Conservation of the Environment

In Attendance: CCE members Mike Usai, chair, Mia Azcue, Eileen Reilly, Julie Ruben and Glenn Sapir; Wendy Whetsel, liaison to the Town Board;

Absent: CCE members Pat Grove and Friedel Muller-Landau

The meeting was called to order at Town Hall at 5:04 p.m by Chair Mike Usai.

We immediately went off the agenda by discussing Bruce Barber's suggestions for updating the Master Plan. In so doing, Wendy Whetsel, liaison to the Town Board, suggested incorporating precautions that should be taken regarding climate change. Mike Usai felt there were more appropriate ways to deal with this, and Wendy was in agreement with Mike's suggestion.

Wendy discussed an illustration she had seen that depicted the costs to a town when development takes place. It was entitled, "More Development = Higher Taxes."

We then returned to the agenda, the first item being an update on the vine-cutting video we wish to prepare for posting on the CCE Facebook page and other outlets. Glenn Sapir reported that a draft script had been developed, which would incorporate an existing video that could be viewed on YouTube. He reported that he had reached out to its producer, University of Minnesota Extension, for permission to use the video, and he was awaiting word from them. He mentioned that the herbicide Roundup is shown to kill the root part of the vine after it has been cut, and CCE members unanimously expressed their opposition to giving Roundup any exposure because of its carcinogenic and other toxic properties. It was agreed that any footage of the herbicide would be removed and that the script would discuss this and offer alternatives not mentioned in the video. Furthermore, it was decided that the introduction would discuss in some detail why invasive species are undesirable. Glenn also presented a proposed Eco-tip he had written about eco-friendly alternatives to Roundup. He mentioned he is awaiting permission from an original source to incorporate their work into the Eco-tip. Mike Usai said he would like to ask an ecotoxicologist with whom he is acquainted to review the eco-tip, and Glenn gave his support to the suggestion.

Wendy updated us on the What's in Your Backyard photo exhibit planned for Town Day on Saturday, Sept. 28. She showed a flyer she designed that solicits photo submissions of wildlife taken by PV residents at PV locations. Mia Azcue confirmed she would frame those photos selected for display. Members said they could provide folding tables for the CCE "booth" at Town Day. Wendy said she had a tri-fold screen/wall that she could provide for hanging photos. Mia said she could provide some laminated maps from the NRI. We decided to have a banner for the CCE made from Gotprint.com, utilizing the logo from our letterhead. Wendy volunteered to follow-up on that. CCE members are invited to use good judgment in obtaining handouts they would like to have at the CCE table. Glenn said he would ask Karen Doyle of the Hudson Highlands Land Trust if we could borrow her enlargements of the NRI maps, as well as the HHLT easels to display them. We acknowledged that we would have to assign CCE members to shifts to make sure we have coverage throughout Town Day.

Discussion turned toward the Cimarron Ranch property in town. Wendy stated that Alexander Kaspar, owner of the property, which was already in the hands of a receiver, has filed for bankruptcy, complicating the sale of the property and lawsuits filed against the property for illegal disposal of solid waste. Glenn mentioned that he had been contacted by Karen Doyle, asking for a letter of support for a

grant application the Hudson Highlands Trust had submitted that would help fund the purchase of the 350-acre Cimarron Ranch property to become the Canopus Creek Preserve.

It was reported that Nancy Montgomery, county legislator for a portion of Putnam Valley, would be addressing the Town Board at its next meeting to advise council members that Putnam County had voted to be a Climate Smart county. That status allows the county to apply for grants to enhance environmental safeguards regarding climate change. Eileen Reilly agreed to raise the question of the town becoming a Climate Smart town at the same board meeting.

Julie Ruben, who, in Glenn's absence, recorded the minutes of the June 11 CCE meeting, asked for clarification of requested changes in the draft minutes by board members, and she received that clarification to finalize the minutes.

A discussion ensued in which we discussed the role of the CCE—what we want to be, what we want to accomplish. Mike will try to set up a meeting with Town Planning Board Chair Tom Patterson and Town Wetlands Inspector Bruce Barber to continue the discussion of our role.

The next meeting of the CCE was set for Tuesday, Aug. 13, at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**GLENN: Continue to pursue permission to use video footage in our own video and to use verbiage for an Eco-tip. Revise script for the video to reflect the commission's wishes stated in the minutes. Contact Karen Doyle regarding obtaining NRI map enlargements and easels for use at Sept. 28 Town Day.**

**MIKE USAI: Share draft Eco-tip on alternatives to Roundup with a ecotoxicologist. Set up meeting among himself, Bruce Barber and Tom Patterson.**

**WENDY WHETSEL: Finalize flyer for What's in Your Backyard, send copies to CCE members for posting around town. Look into making a CCE banner, possibly through Gotprint.com.**

**JULIE RUBEN: Send copy of finalized June 11 CCE meeting minutes to Glen Baisley for posting on the town website.**

**MIA AZCUE: Watch for sales of frames that have backing that can either fold out for table display or have hangers for wall display.**

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn Sapir, Secretary