

Minutes of the June 25, 2019, Meeting of the Putnam Valley Commission for the Conservation of the Environment

In Attendance: CCE members Mike Usai, chair, Mia Azcue, Pat Grove, Friedel Muller-Landau, Eileen Reilly and Glenn Sapir; Wendy Whetsel, liaison to the Town Board;

Absent: CCE member Julie Ruben

The meeting was called to order at Town Hall at 5:07 p.m.

Wendy Whetsel began the discussion about the doctrine of Fair Use, which covers the permissible reproduction of copyrighted material. This is an important concept to understand because Wendy is invested in the educational projects that the CCE has in mind and feels we must know what existing materials produced by a second party can be incorporated legally into our projects. Glenn Sapir added that he and Wendy are planning to produce a video on behalf of the CCE that addresses removing invasive vines, in particular, the oriental bittersweet. Glenn said he is also preparing an Eco-Tip for the website and Facebook page on eco-friendly alternatives to Roundup. Wendy said the video will identify the problem, explain why it is a problem and demonstrate what to do to help eradicate the problem. Friedel Muller-Landau suggested that the NY-NJ Trail Conference could be a source of information. Teatown Reservation was also mentioned as a possible source. Pat Grove called our attention to Free-a-Tree, volunteers in Westchester who are removing vines. Pat pointed out that information can be found online at the Saw Mill River Coalition Free-a-Tree Vine/Cutters website.

It was discussed whether the Town Highway Department could help remove invasive vines on town roadside property.

Wendy and Eileen Riley talked about the Operation Drawdown meeting held earlier at the Putnam Valley Library and the things people can do to help minimize and even reverse climate change. The County has voted to be a Climate Smart county, which will make Putnam eligible for many grants to help remedy climate change. Discussion ensued on the advisability of Putnam Valley becoming a Climate Smart town. Discussion bounced back and forth on the advisability of CCE Chair Mike Usai attending the next Town Board meeting to discuss Climate Smart, but no real resolution to this suggestion was reached. It is expected that County Legislator Bill Gouldman will report to the Town Board on the county's adoption of this program. Wendy asked Eileen to create a list of 10 things people can do to reverse climate change, which would go on the Town website and the CCE Facebook page.

Wendy stated that the County has asked all of the towns to update their Master Plans. In a discussion with Town Planner Bruce Barber, Wendy was given a list of possible topics in which the CCE could be of help in that updating effort. First, define and expand upon the role of Environmental Districts. Second, rewrite outdated wetlands and storm water ordinances. Third, incorporate and facilitate green development. Mike will speak with Bruce about reviewing and updating the master plan items we discussed

Wendy suggested that CCE have a table at Town Day on Sept. 28. There, we would have the opportunity to collect and then allow the distribution of various handouts, gain exposure of our commission and even get people to sign up as vine cutters. The main attraction, however, would be a photo exhibit, "What's in Your Backyard?" This would be an exhibit of wildlife found in Putnam Valley. The photos would have to be taken in Putnam Valley by Putnam Valley residents. Mia Azcue offered to frame the photos selected for display. The photos will be sent to Wendy's attention at Town Hall, or if in digital format, to our putnamvalleycce@gmail.com email address. We will establish a Sept. 10 deadline for submission of

prints. Glenn will write and then Wendy design a flyer that all CCE members will be asked to put up at various outlets throughout the area.

The next meeting of the CCE was set for Tuesday, July 16, at 5 p.m. at Town Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Glenn Sapir, Secretary, CCE

ACTION ITEMS:

WENDY AND GLENN: Continue developing video on removing oriental bittersweet. Also, create flyer announcing CCE's What's in Your Backyard photo display at Town Day and soliciting photos.

GLENN: Finalize Eco-tip on eco-friendly alternatives to Roundup®

EILEEN: Create a list of 10 things people can do to reverse climate change.

MIKE: Speak with Bruce Barber about reviewing and updating the master plan items we discussed.

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