

Minutes of the Dec. 23, 2019, Meeting of the Putnam Valley Commission for the Conservation of the Environment

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

Absent: CCE member Mia Azcue,

Chair Mike Usai called the meeting to order at Town Hall at 5:40 p.m.

The first order of business was to determine the composition of the CCE for 2020. Pat Grove announced that she had been in touch with PV teacher Nick Lenhard, who reported that the PVHS student he had recommended is no longer interested in joining the CCE. Mike Usai reported that PV HS freshman Ben Lowder, whom Pat had met at a Granite Mountain meeting, will join the CCE a full, voting member to fill one of the two available slots for young people, as prescribed in the Town Code. The two-year terms for Mia Azcue, Friedel Muller-Landau and Glenn Sapir expire at the end of 2019. Mia was not there to speak for herself, but had earlier indicated that she would commit to a year of continuing service; Glenn said he, too, would accept the two-year term with the understanding that he was measuring the length of his service based on the first year of the next term. Friedel, the longest-serving member of the CCE, decided not to serve another term, to allow new participation by someone who could attend more meetings. Julie reminded him that meetings are open and his continued participation would be welcome and encouraged. Wendy Whetsel will present the roster of CCE membership to the Town Board at its organizational meeting in January. The CCE will consider multiple candidates who have expressed interest in serving on the CCE to fill the slot now being vacated by Friedel.

In additional reorganization actions, Michael Usai, current chair, and Glenn, current secretary, wished to relinquish those responsibilities. Consequently, Eileen Reilly and Pat Grove were nominated and elected unanimously to fill those two positions, respectively. Glenn handed over to Pat both the CCE's binders of the town's Master Plan and its Natural Resources Inventory. Both were thanked for serving.

In discussing prospective CCE candidates, the conversation turned toward starting times of meetings, to perhaps better accommodate current and future members' schedules. There was a strong majority that favored a later starting time, and while no new time was established, 6:15 or 6:30 p.m. seemed to be agreeable for all if a change were made.

Glenn was asked to announce to PV Webmaster Glen Baisley that an opening exists on the CCE, so that Glen might publicize that through any channels available on the website.

Glenn had delivered the Annual Report of the activities of the CCE to the Town Board at its Dec. 18 meeting, but Pat Grove thought that some of our additional activities should have been included in the report. Therefore, she moved that we amend the Annual Report to include more activities of the CCE, including a meeting held with the Planning Board, Wetlands Inspector, Town Engineer and counsel for the Planning Board. Julie Ruben seconded the motion. The motion was passed with one dissenting vote (Friedel). Pat agreed to write the amendment to the report, to be approved by the entire CCE.

Pat noted that the minutes of the June 25, 2019, CCE meeting mentioned that the County had asked all towns to update their Master Plan and that at a meeting between Bruce Barber and Wendy, Wendy was given a list of possible topics in which the CCE could help in that updating effort. They included: defining and expanding the role of Environmental Districts; second, rewriting outdated wetlands and stormwater ordinances; and third, incorporating and facilitating green development. Mike had been

designated to work with Bruce on this. Pat asked if she also might talk to Bruce on behalf of the CCE, and nobody objected to her request.

Julie suggested it would be constructive to invite a different town board member to our next few meetings, as well as Supervisor Sam Oliverio. Discussion ensued, but no decision was made as to whether to follow up on the suggestion.

Eileen discussed our Facebook page, established by CCE member Pat Grove, who is the Administrator of the page. Eileen and Mia are designated as "editors." Eileen inquired as to what suggestions our members had for inclusion on the FB page. Wendy encouraged us to post only positive, helpful messaging, that is, put up info on CCE activities and Eco Tips.

Making Putnam Valley a Climate Smart Community will likely come before the Town Board in early January, and the CCE asked Julie to send a letter of support to Supervisor Oliverio, first sending the draft to CCE members for approval.

The members agreed to share all comments on minutes, drafts, presentations, etc. among all members going forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m., with all wishing each other a joyous holiday season and a happy new year.

ACTION ITEMS:

WENDY: Present roster of 2020 CCE at organizational meeting.

GLENN: Ask PV webmaster Glen Baisley to publicize the availability of a seat on the CCE.

PAT: Write an amended Annual Report and distribute it to CCE members for comment and approval. On another matter, reach out to Bruce Barber, if she would like, to explore CCE involvement in updating the Master Plan.

JULIE: Draft a letter of support regarding the town becoming a Climate Smart Community, which will be reviewed and approved by the CCE members. After approval, the letter addressed to the Town Board will be sent to Supervisor Oliverio.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn Sapir, CCE Secretary