

**Minutes of the January 21, 2020 Meeting of the  
Putnam Valley Commission for the Conservation of the Environment**

Present:

CCE Members: Eileen Reilly (chair), Mia Azcue, Pat Grove, Julie Ruben, Glenn Sapir, Mike Usai  
CCE Liaison to the Town Board: Wendy Whetsel

Absent:

CCE Student Liaison: Benjamin Lowder  
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Chair Eileen Reilly called the meeting to order at 5:43 pm.

I. Eileen proposed that the year's work of the Commission might best be optimized if each member focused on one or two specific "areas of importance." Much of the remainder of the meeting was organized along these proposed subcommittees.

A. Open Space Inventory, Master Plan Update, Zoning Code Update:

Julie Ruben and Mike Usai volunteered to work together on these related efforts. Another member reported that Supervisor Oliverio had said that the Wetlands Inspector, Bruce Barber, was going to be retained by the Town to revise the Master Plan and that Barber might reach out to the CCE at a later time for assistance. It was suggested that work on the Master Plan and Zoning should await the outcome of the meeting between CCE representatives and Putnam Valley town personnel (detailed below).

B. Climate Smart:

Pat Grove volunteered to act as CCE's coordinator with and liaison to the Putnam Valley Climate Smart Task Force. Wendy Whetsel reported that the Town Board was expected to vote on the Climate Smart Pledge during its February meeting. Town Board Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month. The February meeting will be held on Feb. 19th at 6 PM

C. Project Reviews:

A member distributed excerpts from Chapter 161 (Tree Cutting) and Chapter 165 (Zoning) of the Putnam Valley Town Code to document the statutory role of the CCE in the implementation of the Tree Law.

Eileen asked Wendy Whetsel to arrange a meeting for them to meet, as representatives of the CCE, with the chair of the Planning Board, the Wetlands Inspector, the Town Engineer, and the Town Supervisor to develop lines of communication between them and the CCE.

A member recommended that the CCE become aware of the MS4 storm water management regulations that apply to the Town.

D. Education:

Eileen will chair this subcommittee; Mia Azcue, Glenn Sapir, and Wendy will collaborate with Eileen in this subcommittee. Mia will prepare Eco-tips and send them to Eileen for review before publishing them on the CCE Facebook page and the Town website.

Eileen mentioned that she had experienced some difficulties “sharing” items to the CCE Facebook page and asked Pat to look into this matter.

Eileen had listed ideas for educational efforts on the agenda, namely invasive species, recycling, food waste reduction, eco-tips, fish and wildlife wetland protection, and water protection and conservation. She asked members to think about other efforts of these types that the CCE might address.

## II. An open discussion on a number of topics followed.

- A. Members conferred about the most convenient days and times for CCE meetings, and Mondays at 6 pm was decided upon.
- B. *Sustainable Putnam* has a Facebook page. The first physical meeting of the group will be on February 8 at 12:30 pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Mahopac Library.
- C. Lynne Bernstein had contacted Eileen to ask if the CCE would be interested in joining the “Putnam Pollinator Pathway” initiative of the local Cornell Cooperative Extension. Eileen will invite her to our next meeting to discuss this effort. [note added after the meeting: Lynne is a Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardener]
- D. Newly elected Town Board member Ralph Smith will be invited to the March CCE meeting to discuss the *Climate Smart* project in Putnam Valley.
- E. Glenn Sapir writes a monthly column for *New York Outdoor News* and his two recent columns focus on climate change. His offer to share those manuscripts with members of the CCE was eagerly accepted.
- F. The Environmental Leaders Learning Alliance (ELLA) is open to town-appointed members of conservation commissions from the Lower Hudson Valley. The organization is restructuring and requests a \$100 annual membership fee. More information about the organization was requested, and the matter of Putnam Valley participation will be addressed at a future CCE meeting.
- G. The New York State Association of Conservation Advisory Commissions is planning on holding its annual meeting in Westchester County in 2020.
- H. The Hudson River Estuary Program of the NYS DEC is sponsoring Amphibian Migration and Road Crossing Trainings in February. Nicole Wooten of the Hudson Highlands Land Trust (HHLT) is interested in collaborating with the CCE on this project in the Spring.
- I. Wendy Whetsel described her role as the Town Board’s Liaison to the CCE.
- J. Eileen Reilly will deliver the CCE reports at Town Board meetings.
- K. The campaign to oppose the abolition of truck weight restrictions on Peekskill Hollow Road was discussed. CCE members were urged to become involved in this campaign by attending meetings and writing letters to county officials. It was queried whether the move to abolish truck weight restrictions on Peekskill Hollow Road was related to the proposal to widen the turn onto that road in Oregon Corners.
- L. A member asked if it was permissible to list a CCE affiliation in a letter that expressed a personal opinion. The consensus was that it was permissible to do so to bolster the writer’s credentials, but it should be made clear that the sentiments are those of the letter writer not the CCE as a group.

- M. To our knowledge, there have been no applications submitted for the vacancies on the CCE. Members will reach out to potential candidates.
  - N. Julie Ruben will reach out to the HHLT to explore assistance with our Open Space initiative.
- III. Eileen asked that CCE members send Pat updates about their CCE-related activities no later than February 2. Pat will compile those updates for attachment to the agenda and minutes of the February CCE meeting. She will send an email reminder to CCE members on January 31st.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

The next CCE meeting will be held at 6 pm on February 3 in Town Hall.
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Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Grove, Ph.D.

Secretary