

## Minutes of the August 13, 2020 Meeting of the Putnam Valley Commission for the Conservation of the Environment

Note: The meeting was conducted via *Zoom* videoconferencing.

Present:

CCE Members: Eileen Reilly (chair), Pat Grove, Julie Ruben, Glenn Sapir,  
Mike Usai

CCE Liaison from the Town Board: Wendy Whetsel

Guests: Ralph Smith, PV Town Board; Climate Smart Community Coordinator;  
Anthony Proetta, Jr., PV resident

Absent:

CCE Member: Mia Azcue, Ben Lowder (student member)

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Chair Eileen Reilly called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm.

### I. Greetings and Introductions

#### A. Proposed New Member

Eileen Reilly welcomed Anthony Proetta who has expressed interest in joining the PV CCE, and has attended three recent meetings of this group. Eileen asked Wendy Whetsel about the status of Anthony's appointment to the CCE. Wendy stated that the Town Board will be appointing him in one of the next meetings. At the request of a member, Wendy clarified the process: if a person indicates the intention to join the CCE, the candidate is asked to attend a few meetings of the group, and then submit a resumé to the Town Board. The Town Board makes the final decision about appointments to the CCE.

### II. PV Town Board

#### A. Headwater Streams

Town Board member Wendy Whetsel discussed the ecological value of Headwater Streams, sharing information that she had learned by attending a recent webinar on this topic offered by Hudsonia and the NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program.

### III. PV Climate Smart Community

Town Board member Ralph Smith reported that the Task Force recently entertained a presentation about Community Choice Aggregation (CCA). A CCA allows local governments to procure power on behalf of their residents from an alternative supplier (in this case supplying renewable energy from wind and solar power) at a lower cost while being assured that the energy comes from renewable and not fossil fuel sources. If Putnam Valley joins a CCA, the transmission and distribution of energy and equipment maintenance would continue to be provided by NYSEG.

Most of the members of the CCE were interested in hosting such a presentation at a future special session of the CCE. Eileen will contact Jeff Domanski of Hudson Valley Energy (an organization for the protection of communities on the path to 100% renewable energy) to arrange such a session.

## IV. Ongoing Activities

### A. Siting for New Major Renewable Energy Installations

Town Board member Wendy Whetsel repeated information that she had shared at earlier meetings about the Town's concerns about siting major renewable energy installations.

### B. Critical Environmental Areas (CEA) Development

Wendy will share information that she has gathered from other municipalities that have implemented CEAs in their towns.

### C. Climate Smart CCE Liaison

Mike Usai affirmed the information that Ralph had shared about Community Choice Aggregations. Mike remarked that the Climate Smart Task Force is working well together, and it is a positive experience for him.

### D. PV Open Space Inventory (OSI)

Julie Ruben advised that the OSI deadline has been pushed back one year by NYS DEC. She will continue to monitor the availability of NYS grants for OSI preparation and speak with the DEC to learn what the CCE might be able to do in preparation for the eventual availability of NYS grants.

### E. PV Town Master Plan

Bruce Barber advised Eileen that the Master Plan is on temporary hold due to COVID-19 and lack of funding.

### F. Educational

Wendy mentioned that an upcoming Zoom meeting concerning invasive plants would be hosted by Roaring Brook. When queried about leadership that the Town might take regarding moving toward a "new normal" of sustainability and energy conservation, Wendy noted that solar panels are planned for Town Hall, and LED lighting has been installed throughout the Town. Mia Azcue, Eileen, and Glenn Sapir continue posting educational information on the CCE Facebook page.

A discussion took place regarding the fate of materials recycled through bottle redemption machines at local stores. A member responded that aluminum is one of the most truly recyclable materials, but was not sure what happens to the glass and plastic that is collected. CCE members will follow up on this important issue.

### G. PV Planning Board Project Reviews

Eileen advised that she will be attending the next Planning Board meeting on Monday, August 17. She has been advised that documents for Planning Board meetings are available on the Town's web page. To date, the CCE has not been notified when new applications have been submitted, or resubmittals have been forwarded for Planning Board review.

## V. New Business

### A. Hunting at Granite Mountain Preserve

Glenn Sapir stated that he had been working together with Nicole Wooten (Hudson Highlands Land Trust) to re-establish a hunting season at Granite Mountain. Thirty

permits have been made available by Hudson Highlands Land Trust through the NYS DEC to allow a short period of firearms-only (shotgun and muzzleloader) deer hunting at Granite Mountain Preserve in Fall 2020. The hunting effort will cull deer and thus help to conserve plant resources at the Preserve.

#### B. Citizen Science Initiatives

Pat Grove informed the CCE about two projects in which she is involved. She is completing online training in culvert assessment and hopes to assist Megan Lung (NYS DEC) in surveying culverts in local parklands.

She has also been working with Nicole Wooten (Hudson Highlands Land Trust) to initiate a WAVE program in Putnam Valley. WAVE (Water Assessments by Volunteer Evaluators) is sponsored by the NYS DEC. Their project plans annual assessments of stream quality by collecting and cataloging benthic macroinvertebrates, excellent indicators of stream health, in Peekskill Hollow Brook and its headwater streams. Pat indicated that she and Nicole were seeking information about access points to the waterways near riffles and would welcome any CCE members who wanted to learn the assessment protocols. Pat and Nicole plan to do some preliminary sampling this summer and requested some donated supplies from CCE members (i.e., white trays with lips, white ice cube trays, turkey basters, pails). Two members expressed interest in participating in this project.

#### C. Public Hearing

Eileen reminded members about the upcoming online public hearing on August 19 at 5 pm. Two of the proposed Town Code amendments involve the CCE directly. Eileen will resend the CCE's letter of response to the proposed amendments to Supervisor Oliverio in case transmission had been affected by power outages. A member praised the collaborative process that went into writing the CCE response.

#### D. Waste Recycling

Anthony Proetta advised that recycling collected in Putnam Valley goes to the recycling center in Beacon but was not able to verify where it goes after that. Subsequent to the meeting, he shared a link to an informative publication about the recycling issue.

(<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2019/03/china-has-stopped-accepting-our-trash/584131/>)

The meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Grove, Ph.D.  
Secretary, CCE

**The next CCE meeting will be on September 15, 2020 at 6 pm most likely via Zoom videoconferencing.**

Attachment 1.



**PUTNAM VALLEY  
COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION  
OF THE ENVIRONMENT  
Town Hall, Putnam Valley NY 10579**

**AUGUST 13, 2020, 6 PM - ZOOM MEETING AGENDA**

**Greetings and Introductions**

- **Proposed New Member: Anthony Proetta – Resume has been submitted to PV Town Board for review and approval. Status:**

**PV Town Board -Wendy Whetsel, PV Town Liaison**

**PV Climate Smart Community - Ralph Smith, Coordinator 10 Minutes**

- **Community Solar Farm Discussion**

**Looking for member participation:**

- **Siting for New Major Renewable Energy Installations -**
- **Critical Environmental Areas (CEA) Development**
- **Climate Smart CCE Liaison – Michael Usai**
- **PV Town Master Plan –Town Planner advised the update Master Plan is on temporary hold due to COVID and lack of funding**
- **Educational: Invasive Vines; Recycling Materials by Putnam Waste Disposal Companies; Food Waste; etc.**
- **Project Reviews –E Reilly, M Usai, J Ruben –**
- **Next Meeting Date:**
- **New Business:**