

Minutes of the July 14, 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), Mia Azcue, Pat Grove, Ben Lowder (student member) [via sporadic phone connection], Julie Ruben, Glenn Sapir
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: Mike Usai

Chair Eileen Reilly called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

I. Greetings and Introductions

Eileen Reilly welcomed Anthony Proetta. He has expressed interest in joining the PV CCE, and he has been invited to attend the next few meetings of this group.

II. PV Town Board

A. PV Town Environmental Assessment. Proposed Code Modifications

Town Board member Wendy Whetsel reported that the two amendments that had been proposed for the PV Town Code (Chapters 161 and 165) and that could have modified the CCE's advisory roles to the Town's Planning Board and the Zoning Board are no longer under consideration.

Note: Although the above reflects what was said at the CCE meeting, the information was not correct. The two amendments have not been removed from consideration.

Wendy said that the Planning Board is aware that the CCE must be made aware of projects that are under review even if the project involves neither wetlands nor the tree law (Chapter 165), and that Supervisor Sam Oliverio supports our role. The CCE can act as an important resource for the Planning Board given our knowledge and areas of expertise. Another member noted that, as an advocate for the environment, the CCE can provide an important perspective on issues the Town is facing.

B. History of How and Why CCE Was Reinstated

In past years, the CCE had had a major role in project review with the Planning Board. However, around the time when Bruce Barber (Wetlands Inspector and Planner) was hired by the Town, the Town Board dissolved the CCE.

A CCE member questioned whether the CCE had been reinstated to its full role as outlined in the Town Code. Wendy read aloud the Town Code segment (Article 3, Chapter 8, Section 23) that describes the powers and duties of the CCE.

Other boards and commissions of the Town and the staff in Town Hall may need to be reminded of the CCE's role in Putnam Valley.

III. PV Climate Smart Community

Town Board member Ralph Smith reported that the Task Force would be having its second meeting that evening and would be joined by Carla Castillo of the Hudson Valley Regional Council. (Carla is the Deputy Executive Director and Clean Energy Communities Coordinator.) Members of the Task Force have reviewed the twelve Climate Smart Certification Actions, and each member has chosen the Action s/he will oversee.

IV. Ongoing

A. Siting for New Major Renewable Energy Installations

Town Board member Wendy Whetsel had suggested that a first step might be to map tax parcels in Putnam Valley that are 10 acres or larger and thus might qualify as sites for major renewable energy installations. Pat Grove has shared a GIS shape file that she prepared that could be overlaid on Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) maps to show the location of these large parcels.

Pat Grove reported on her phone conversation (10 July 2020) with Bruce Barber. Bruce requested her assistance in mapping areas in PV that potentially could and could not be used for renewable energy installations and battery farms. She noted that Bruce said that he will also be contacting Mike Usai for assistance in this endeavor. Bruce agreed to investigate lot size and other requirements for renewable energy installations and battery farms so that the relevant mapping can be done.

B. Critical Environmental Areas (CEA) Development

Town Board member Ralph Smith emphasized that it is the role of the CCE, not the Planning Board, to identify Critical Environmental Areas in PV. Glenn Sapir noted that the NRI maps are the basis for identifying CEAs, and that public input will be integral to the process. Ideally, the CEAs will be identified during PV's one-year moratorium on siting major renewable energy installations.

Eileen charged the members of the CCE with formulating criteria that might be used to identify CEAs, and said that that would be on the agenda of the August CCE meeting.

C. Climate Smart CCE Liaison

(Mike Usai submitted his report electronically since he was not able to attend this CCE meeting.) The task force met for the first time on 7/2. The members introduced themselves and gave a short bio so we can learn about each other. There is an impressive diversity of background and expertise represented. Ralph mentioned that some towns have had a difficult time putting together a task force, but PV had a lot of interest, which really speaks to the enthusiasm in the town.

Much of the rest of the meeting was spent going through the website (climatesmart.ny.gov) and getting acquainted with it and some of the requirements. Each member volunteered to familiarize themselves with certification action pledge elements and report back at the next meeting on the actions. I took land use and will report back at the next meeting I'm able to attend. The task force's second meeting is 7/14.

D. PV Open Space Inventory

Julie Ruben will continue to monitor the availability of NYS grants for OSI preparation. The NRI maps may satisfy the mapping requirement of the OSI.

She reported that Putnam Valley's NRI is being put forth by the NYS DEC as a model for other communities.

E. PV Town Master Plan

Eileen will speak with Bruce Barber about the CCE's role in the revision of the Putnam Valley Master Plan and related issues. CEAs will be an important part of this document.

F. Educational

A MS PowerPoint presentation about Asiatic Bittersweet, a common invasive vine in our area, can be viewed on the CCE page of the PV town website and is linked through the CCE Facebook page. The presentation was prepared by Wendy and other associates. Eileen encouraged CCE members who had personal Facebook pages to post a link to this presentation on their pages.

G. PV Planning Board Project Reviews

Eileen participated in a lengthy July Planning Board meeting that was conducted via Zoom videoconferencing. She reported briefly on the status of the submissions that had been discussed, as well as some obstacles she had encountered in her endeavor to serve as the CCE's liaison to the Planning Board.

V. New Discussions

A. Handling of Recycling Materials by Putnam Waste Companies

Mia Azcue reported that although waste collection companies in PV are collecting recyclables, the materials are likely not being recycled. She had contacted her waste collection company and was told that there is no longer a market for bottle glass, and that China, which had accepted materials for recycling in the past, is no longer doing so. Another member contacted her waste collection company and the staff member she spoke with would not tell her where collected recyclables were going.

Some members named other local communities that might be recycling more effectively and said that they would seek further information from those communities.

In light of the issues involved in recycling, reducing the use of plastic is critical. Mia shared one way that she reduces the use of plastic in her home (Food Huggers, Earthhero.com).

B. CCE Reports at PV Town Board Meetings

A member questioned why CCE Reports are no longer part of Town Board Meetings.

C. Spraying of Herbicides Along Roadways

Several CCE members reported that areas along Peekskill Hollow Road appeared to have been sprayed with herbicides. Since that road is under the jurisdiction of Putnam County, the county will have to be contacted to learn more about areas selected for spraying and the identity of the herbicide used.

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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

The next CCE meeting will be on August 13, 2020 at 6 pm via *Zoom* videoconferencing.

Attachment 1.



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

JULY 14, 2020 ZOOM MEETING AGENDA

Greetings and Introductions

- **Proposed New Member: Anthony Proetta**

PV Town Board -Wendy Whetsel, PV Town Liaison – 10 Minutes

- **PV Town Environmental Assessment Part 1- Proposed Code Modifications**
- **History of How and Why CCE was reinstated**

PV Climate Smart Community - Ralph Smith, Coordinator 10 Minutes

Ongoing:

- **Siting for New Major Renewable Energy Installations**
- **Critical Environmental Areas (CEA) Development**
- **Climate Smart CCE Liaison – Michael Usai**
- **PV Open Space Inventory**
- **PV Town Master Plan –**
- **Educational –W Whetsel, M Azcue,**
- **PV Planning Board Project Reviews –E Reilly**

New Discussions

- **Handling of Recycling Materials by Putnam Waste Companies**