



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

Meeting Minutes

February 15, 2022, 5:30 PM

Minutes:

Meeting began: 5:35PM

Present: Wendy Whetsel (Chair), Mia Azcue, Eileen Reilly, Julie Ruben, Glenn Sapir, Mike Usai

Public present: Jean McGee (potential new member)

Absent: None

The meeting began with M. Azcue introducing Jean McGee as a friend with a strong interest in environmental issues who is interested in joining the CCE. Mia detailed Ms. McGee's professional history including running co-ops, professional massage therapist, and co-founder of the not-for-profit Second Chance Foods.

The CCE agreed to moving the CEA discussion to later in agenda so all can be present for the discussion.

Wendy led a discussion of road salts and other ice removal, and potential - environmentally sensitive alternatives. She cited a NYT article on the subject that discussed several alternatives to road salt and brine. Salt is harmful to animals, kills plants, causes rust on cars and piping, and causes surface and groundwater contamination. Can also harm private property such as pavers and pavement.

The article listed several better alternatives including vinegar, beet juice, calcium chloride and sand.

The Commission discussed potential ways to communicate this issue to the public and educate about the environmental concerns with saline runoff from deicing chemicals, and less harmful alternatives that can be used. It was decided that Wendy would discuss the topic during the public comment period of the next Town Board meeting, and a link to the NYT article would be put on the CCE Facebook site. A more formal outreach would wait until next fall prior to next winter's road treatments; it's too late for outreach this season.

Wendy read a bit from the article regarding rock salt impacts.

Shawn Keeler, PV Highway Supervisor, went to the City of Yonkers to discuss deicing with their DPW and learned they use beet juice in place of brine to pre-treat roads. PV began using beet juice this winter and reduced salt use by 25%, with perhaps a 50% reduction next winter.

The CCE discussed whether there were any negative impacts from beet juice brine and Mike circulated an article that found there may be impacts to aquatic invertebrates.

The CCE then discussed an issue with community solar and NYSEG bills where people who signed up with Ampion stopped receiving NYSEG bills and were getting were in arrears with large bills. NYSEG is not billing during the transition to solar for some and nobody seems to know the reason.

It was suggested to reach out to NYSEG and email everybody with any information gathered.

Eileen gave an update on the "Foot Hill Rd. Solar Farm" in the Town of Yorktown adjacent to the PV High and Middle Schools. The project is still with Yorktown's Planning Board and no decision has yet been made. The Yorktown CCA is not in favor of the project and is concerned about the 15 acres that will not be developed. The PB's concerns with regard to tree removal and restitution have not been addressed. Uncertainty remains with who has jurisdiction over the town's tree fund and how it's spent. ConEd (applicant) is unhappy with the process and the town not following prescribed review timeframes.

Julie agreed to write a letter from the PV CCE in support of denying project based on tree removal.

Glenn shared that he spoke with Yorktown Supervisor at an event his temple and found the Supervisor unsympathetic.

Julie then provided an update on the critical environmental area (CEA) project. She spoke with Hudsonia and reported on special technical grants available that would provide funding for assistance with developing CEAs. The RFA out in early March, award in April, assistance in May. The grants would fund mapping, crafting justifications for proposed CEAs, presentations to public and municipal agencies, and four remote meetings.

Hudsonia also has a technical assistance grant where the CCE may be able to get some funding if our application is denied. That would cover the cost of mappings (~\$2,850), one CEA and revise justification, and one public presentation.

Project Reviews

The final agenda item was the projects before the Planning Board. Those were not discussed in detail and Eileen will reach out to Mike for reviews.

The next meeting of the CCE will be on March 8, 2022, at 5:30M

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM