



**Town of Poughkeepsie
Conservation Advisory Commission (CAC)**

**January 28, 2019, 7:30 PM
Main Meeting Room, Town Hall**

Present:

CAC members: Pamela Kingsley, Kerstin Cruger, Susan Karnes Hecht
Town representative: Michael Welti, Director of Municipal Development
Guest: Dan Shapley, Water Quality Program Director, Riverkeeper

Discussion with Riverkeeper:

Dan had a positive response regarding what we outlined as our intended focus, feels that NRI (Natural Resource Inventory) is central for CAC, suggests we look at Dutchess County NRI as a model.

Riverkeeper is working with the Town on the Hudson 7 water quality initiative, this involves 7 municipalities that draw water from the Hudson (City and Town of Poughkeepsie, Town of Hyde Park, Town of Lloyd, Town and Village of Rhinebeck, Town of Esopus/Port Ewen). City/town of Pough share a water plant near Marist. Riverkeeper started working with them about 2 years ago, there was a formal resolution to band together to focus on protecting drinking water in May 2018. Their plan is based on work done by Riverkeeper, and Dan will share that report with us. It recommended that they update source water assessment to understand risks to the drinking water supply, then create a plan to reduce or eliminate risks.

DWSP2 Drinking Water Source Protection Program – free resources for Hudson 7 to do this, Dan hopes application will proceed – a jump start. They are also doing some nuts and bolts and some educational presentations. Jay Baisley (Town Supervisor) is technically the representative to Hudson 7, backed up by Bill Carlos (Ward 2 Councilman who is also Chair of Comprehensive Plan committee).

CAC does not have any formal role in this at the moment, but they will develop a stakeholder group – Hudson 7 members plus town water, engineering folks, etc. CAC could potentially send a rep. We could be helpful with the public education aspect. We discussed the possibility of enclosing info in household water bills.

Pam asked if anyone is assessing river traffic? The proposal to add anchorages was defeated, a river safety committee was created as a result of that process. Make sure commercial shipping traffic is safe. There is room for other initiatives. Oil traffic is much lower now than at its peak.

What about salinity? Pough is the southernmost point at which water is drawn from Hudson for drinking. During dryer times salt comes further north. Climate change may impact this. At Chelsea there is an emergency pumping station for NYC but it is not being used.

Dan has a map of watershed relevant to drinking water that he will share with us. Mike noted that we have a lot of the info on flood plains, etc. already. Inventory maps of resources, etc. already done. Many pieces of NRI are actually already done, we do not need to start from scratch. Mike wants to talk to HREP (Hudson River Estuary Program) about how we can use the info to best advantage (see further discussion below). Dan urges focus on water supply in NRI, it's a chance to refocus on wetlands, etc. for stronger protections.

Overlap with CSC (Climate Smart Community): Riverkeeper just drafted a water-related list drawn from CSC actions and we can obtain this list.

Pam is already connected to folks working on the Wappinger Creek watershed – we need to stay abreast of this.

Pam asked about eel barriers, is there any evaluation of this? Dan said that Riverkeeper is active in removing dams (human made), they need to be removed as they block fish migrations. Some culverts also need to be changed. Important to master plan that culverts are large enough especially with climate change and larger precipitation events. DEC will come and assess culverts and will provide prioritized list to use in conjunction with road work, etc. Dan will send info link. (Note: herring, shad, sturgeon, striped bass, etc. come here to spawn as far north as Troy - eels do it in reverse, born in ocean and babies come back to grow here.)

Items for review:

- Formalization of CAC Chair by town and renewal of 2 seats was done shortly after November meeting. Kerstin and Margaret may need to be sworn in again - Kerstin will check on this.
- Susan reported on progress on Climate Smart Community program. She met with Mike and Jay and then facilitated a meeting of Mike, Jay, Europa McGovern (Hudson Valley Regional Council) and Michelle Gluck (Cornell Cooperative). Michelle and Europa are funded with programs to assist municipalities in pursuing CSC as well as CEC (Clean Energy Community) and will be working with the Town. Following the meeting, the Town signed a letter of agreement related to this which will in turn allow Michelle's organization to apply for renewed funding for 2019. Michelle is already pursuing completion of the needed Climate Planning Tool which is a CSC action and will guide us in planning. The Town will need a formal resolution establishing a CSC Task Force, and Susan expects to be involved in that group, which will also draw from various town departments. Susan attended the first public meeting of the new Dutchess County CSC Task Force as well (Kerstin also attended part of it). The County group expects to provide guidance to municipalities as part of their work. Mike noted that the Town received CSC grant for the Comprehensive Plan as well as a Greenway grant, town budget money is allocated so we are set to move ahead on this.
- Update on HREP contact and NRI

Mike talked with Laura and Nate from HREP re: NRI, determined that we do not need to do an entire new NRI for our grant. We also have habitat assessment already from Hudsonia. We have a rich base of info already to incorporate for the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan. Last time we did a comprehensive plan it resulted in a review of zoning, but there wasn't a lot of follow-up with open space. Mike would like to come out of the Plan this time with solid recommendations, a firm plan, for open space conservation. HREP would likely fund this type of study as well as offer technical guidance. He will watch for grant deadlines. This would be a more effective use of funding than a new NRI since we already have so many pieces.

How could CAC participate in this? Mike suggested CAC could be tasked with the open space planning piece of comprehensive plan and later follow through. A great role for CAC - "a champion for open space." This could be an actual action stated within the plan. Look at the Town website for the comprehensive plan link, we can see all of the work that has been done so far.

- Parks

Wendy is not here to report on her meeting with Jessica Lopez (Ward 3 Councilperson). Pam noted that some grants were obtained for town parks along with some County funds. She spoke to Tom Meyering, Parks Director, there are grants for Rochdale and Overocker Parks.

- Update from 1/23/19 EMC meeting and other CACs

Susan attended EMC; bulk of meeting was devoted to a presentation from Citizens' Climate Lobby about the new federal carbon fee/dividend legislation. (Disclosure: she is also a member of that group.) The next EMC meeting is 2/27 and will be the annual CAC Roundtable and State of the Environment for Dutchess County. Susan plans to attend and everyone is welcome. Susan was in contact with a LaGrange CAC representative who shared some general thoughts about approach. It was Susan's opinion that the activities being pursued by that group differ in scope from what we are discussing here, and that the Roundtable will be a valuable event to find out if other CACs are working on similar initiatives to our own. Wendy is not here to report on Red Hook contact.

- CCA (Community Choice Aggregation)

Susan learned from Jay Baisley that the Town Board had two presentations on CCA, and a lot of questions remain about its viability for the Town. We feel that this will likely be an ongoing discussion as other municipalities pursue CCA and it becomes feasible to see their results. Should the CAC members desire to educate themselves about CCA, she has a contact who can visit with us.

New business:

More CAC members are needed! Pam will contact Ward 5 Councilman, Matt Woolever. Wendy Greggs, currently here for Ward 3, may need to resign and in this case we would approach Jessica Lopez to discuss.

Kerstin will attend 2/19/19 "Nature in our City" presentation about City of Poughkeepsie NRI and report back to us. Pam will connect Kerstin with Jen Rubbo at Vassar Environmental Cooperative.

Next meeting: February 25, 2019 at 7:30 pm

Minutes recorded by Susan Karnes Hecht