

**TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION (CACC)**

May 14, 2007 Meeting Record

Members Present:

Libby Liebschutz, Chair; Mike DiPaolo; Nancy Heinzen; John Mead; Ted Putney; Mike Waldenmaier;
Matt Watson; Caleb Wistar

Staff Members Present:

George Leveille, Debbie Kitchen

Chair Report:

- A. **Approval of April 9, 2007 Meeting Record:** Ms. Liebschutz asked the members if they had any final comments on the draft April 9 meeting record that was circulated. Hearing none, the members voted to approve the meeting record. Mr. Leveille indicated the approved meeting record would be posted on the Town's web site.
- B. **Report on April 25 presentation to the Town Board:** Ms. Liebschutz reported that she and Mr. Leveille made a presentation to the Town Board at its April 25 meeting regarding the public comments made at its January 8 workshop and with regard to clarification of proposed Task 3. The presentation identified the need to address certain procedural issues. Ms. Liebschutz expressed concern that she believed that the April 18 memo to the Town Board regarding Task 3 reflected the consensus of the CACC when it was apparent from comments made at the meeting by Ms. Newell on behalf of John Mead, Mike Waldenmaier and herself that this was not the case. Recognizing that the CACC will not agree on everything, Ms. Liebschutz indicated the need to establish protocol to address dissenting viewpoints.

A group discussion ensued. Mr. Waldenmaier again expressed the rural landowner's concern about mapping. He also suggested that a law enforcement official might be a good addition to the CACC. Several of the members including Mr. Putney, Mr. Wistar, Mr. DiPaolo and Mr. Watson support the idea that CACC recommendations should reflect the consensus of the group. Ms. Heinzen and Mr. Putney indicated that they had some issues with the memo but did not pursue them in the interest of seeking consensus. Ms. Liebschutz indicated that circulating documents by e-mail might not be the best method for establishing consensus. In closing this discussion, it was agreed at the suggestion of Ms. Heinzen that, going forward, a step should be built into the process to ensure consensus. The discussion led to the consideration that all documents sent by CACC to Town Board should represent the entire CACC, either by stating a single consensus position or, where no single consensus position can be achieved, by describing the various positions of the CACC members to the satisfaction of the CACC as a whole.

Discussion of Task 2: Open Space Protection Programs

- A. **Communication to January 8 Workshop Attendees:** Mr. Leveille outlined the steps taken to date by staff including the compilation of an attendee list by Debbie Kitchen. A group discussion followed. Mr. DiPaolo and Mr. Wistar both suggested that regular mail be used to reach out to workshop attendees. The members agreed to an approach that would bring the workshop attendees up to date with CACC activities, direct them to the compiled workshop comments posted on the Town's web site, and ask them for suggestions regarding topics that they would like more information about. Mr. Leveille agreed to circulate a draft letter to the members for their review and comment.

The discussion turned to broader issues of communication. Mr. Putney suggested that information could be included in an upcoming issue of the Bethlehem Report. Mr. Leveille concurred and also indicated that the Town's new monthly electronic newsletter would also be a good medium for communicating CACC activities.

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B. **Posting of Workshop Comments:** Mr. Leveille indicated that the comments were published shortly after the April 25 Town Board meeting in which they were discussed.

C. **Public Comment on Task 2:**

- Linda Jasinski commented that many folks do not like to give out their e-mail address.
- Lisa Evans expressed difficulty in finding up to date information regarding the CACC on the Town's web site.
- Nancy Neff felt that most people would be interested in knowing about what programs and incentives might be available for land conservation activities.

Discussion of Task 3: Map of Existing Conservation and Recreation Land:

A. **Review of Town Board Direction:** Ms. Liebschutz indicated that at its meeting of April 25, the Town Board concurred with the CACC's interpretation regarding this task. She indicated that Councilman Kyle Kotary had inquired whether or not all vacant land could be placed on the map. Councilman Dan Plummer interjected that adding all vacant land was not what was envisioned with this task and the Board unanimously agreed.

B. **Discussion of Work Plan:** Mr. DiPaolo suggested that, as a courtesy, the school districts be contacted regarding their inclusion on the map. It was suggested by Ms. Heinzen that the Town's GIS Specialist Jason Baum be invited to the next CACC meeting to do a demonstration on how to build a map using GIS data. It was also suggested that Albany County be contacted regarding the inclusion of the proposed "rail trail" on the map. Ms. Heinzen inquired as to the potential for piecing together any land set asides along the Dowers Kill as part of the map's development. Mr. Leveille explained the practical difficulty in accomplishing this but agreed that it would be a worthwhile initiative to undertake. A lengthy discussion regarding the value, characteristics and utility of the map ensued and it was generally agreed that this was a relatively limited task that could be accomplished over the next couple of months.

C. **Public Comment on Task 3:**

- Ms. Jasinski inquired as to whether or not we could map features that were outside the Town boundaries such as Five Rivers Environmental Center?
- David Van Luven expressed concern about using a parcel-based approach to developing a map related to open space.

Action Items:

- A. Staff to prepare and circulate a draft letter to the January 8 workshop attendees
- B. Staff to develop an article for the Bethlehem Report outlining the CACC activities to date.
- C. Staff to review web site to ensure that all current materials are posted and accessible.
- D. Staff to post April 9, 2007 meeting record on web site
- E. Staff to post Ms. Liebschutz's April 18 letter to the Town Board regarding Task 3 on the Town's web site

Next Meeting:

Monday, June 11, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. in Town Hall Room 101