

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

July 9, 2007 Meeting Record

Members Present:

Libby Liebschutz, Chair; Mike DiPaolo; Jeff Freedman; Nancy Heinzen; John Mead; Val Newell; Mike Waldenmaier

Staff Members Present:

Rob Leslie, Debbie Kitchen, Mike Morelli

Chair Report:

- A. **Approval of June 11, 2007 Meeting Record:** Ms. Liebschutz asked the members if they had any final comments on the draft June 11, 2007 meeting record that was circulated. Hearing none, the members voted to approve the meeting record. Mr. Leslie indicated the approved meeting record would be posted on the Town's web site.

- B. **Announcement of new CACC member**
Ms. Liebschutz announced that the Town Board approved the appointment of Paul Sieloff to the CACC. She indicated that Mr. Sieloff was unable to attend the meeting due to prior vacation plans, and indicated that he is currently employed by the Albany County Office of Management and Budget. Mr. Sieloff is scheduled to attend the CACC's August meeting.

- C. **Other**
Ms. Liebschutz informed the members that during the July 11 Town Board meeting the Board is scheduled to accept a recommendation to appoint David Erik VanLuven to the CACC.

Discussion of Task 2: Open Space Funding Report

- A. **E-Newsletter Article:** Ms. Liebschutz led a discussion of the proposal to provide a "CACC Corner" article series section in the Town's monthly e-Newsletter. She asked Mr. Leslie to discuss the draft text that was prepared for the series. Mr. Leslie indicated that text was prepared for the introduction and closing sections of the CACC articles that are to appear in the newsletter. These sections are to inform the reader of the goals of the "CACC Corner" series. Mr. Leslie stated that when specific CACC activities are not available to include in the "CACC Corner" series, sections from the Open Space Protection Programs – Funding and Tools Report will be used. Committee members agreed to start the series with programs from the Conservation Methods, Forms and Ownership section. The initial publication of the CACC Corner will discuss "Purchase/ownership of property by the Town".

- B. **Draft Bethlehem Report Article:** The members provided their comments regarding the Draft Bethlehem Report article that was distributed prior to the meeting. Comments regarding adding text from the Comprehensive Plan's discussion of the CACC were provided. Also, it was indicated that the article's discussion about a CACC vacancy should be removed since the Town Board is scheduled to fill the vacant CACC member position at the next Board meeting. Mr. Leslie indicated he would address the comments in the final edit of the report, which is to be submitted by July 11, 2007 for inclusion in the August publication.

- C. **Spotlight Shorts:** The members agreed that the CACC monthly meetings schedule should be included in the Spotlight's Community/Monthly calendar. Ms. Newell suggested a statement, such as "The Citizens Advisory Committee on Conservation meets the 2nd Monday of every month in Town Hall Room 101" to be provided in the Spotlight when space is available. Ms. Newell indicated this statement might appear on multiple pages in the Spotlight when space is available.

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION (CACC)

July 9, 2007 Meeting Record

D. Public Comment on Task 2:

- John Smolinsky stated that he felt it was a good idea to inform the public about the Open Space Protection Programs – Funding and Tools Report and indicated that the CACC should begin to think about next steps. He mentioned that although the Town Board has not tasked the CACC with developing an open space plan, the Committee should research what other communities have produced.

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

- A. **Review of Revised Map:** The revised draft map was presented to the Members and it was indicated that comments from the June meeting have been incorporated. The Committee decided to remove the Future Rail Trail ROW from the map since it is not an existing recreation land and rename the classification of “Purported Conservation” to “Conservation”. Mr. Freedman suggested showing the Fiver Rivers Environmental Education Center as State owned land. Mr. DiPaolo suggested providing definitions of the six classifications (Public Recreation, Private Recreation, Town Owned , County Owned, Educational, and Conservation) on the map. A discussion ensued on how to go about creating definitions. Ms. Liebschutz suggested that Mr. DiPaolo work with Mr. Leslie to develop the classification definitions and add them to the map. Mr. Mead suggested showing the full parcel boundary of Five Rivers Environmental Education Center as it extends into the Town of New Scotland. Other members suggested showing recreation and conservation lands that border the Town, such as the Stevens Farm in the City of Albany and the Onesquethaw Creek Preserve in the Town of New Scotland. Ms. Newell suggested calculating the number of acres in the Town’s agricultural district and miles of sewer and water line easements in the Town. A discussion ensued regarding the difference between lands located in the agricultural district and those that take advantage of an agricultural assessment.

Ms. Liebschutz distributed copies of a land cover map illustrating developed and undeveloped lands. Mr. Leslie indicated the map was created from the USGS 1997 LandSat imagery. He cautioned the Committee that such a map is dated; and therefore, not accurate to reflect development over the past 10 years. Mr. Leslie mentioned there are no future plans by the USGS to update the land cover map to 2007.

Ms. Liebschutz explained that the task at hand is to map existing conservation and recreation lands which is indicated as a Phase 1 task in the CACC’s memo to the Town Board regarding clarification of the Task. She mentioned that as Chairman she is required to provide the Town Board with a quarterly report, which she will begin to draft.

- B. **Discussion – What does the map tell us?** Mr. DiPaolo suggested that the map would send a better message if it had classification definitions provided in the legend. Mr. Mead stated that he felt the map showed that public recreation parks were located in locations that serve the majority of the Town’s population. He suggested providing usage information and the facilities available to users at each park. Committee members agreed that they were not tasked with deducing conclusions from the map. As such, it was decided that the Town Board should determine their own conclusions.

Following Mr. Mead’s comment regarding the Town’s population served by public recreation lands, Mr. Leslie presented a map that illustrated an analysis of the Town’s population currently served by its various parks. Mr. Leslie stated that the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) established standards to assist municipalities in their determination of adequate park acreage for residents. The standard indicated municipalities should generally have approximately 10-

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION (CACC)

July 9, 2007 Meeting Record

acres/1000 population. Currently, the NRPA standard is now used as a guideline, since it is felt that the local community should determine their requirements for park acreage. Using the NRPA recommendation as a guideline, Mr. Leslie indicated that the Town currently has approximately 300 acres of public recreation lands for approximately 30,000 residents, so currently the guideline is met. Mr. Leslie described the process in developing the classification of the Town's parks based on the NRPA park classifications, and illustrated the general service area of each park, ranging from ¼ mile to 2-miles. He indicated that those areas of the Town that are not covered by a park's service area are underserved. Specific areas included the New Scotland Road area in Slingerlands and the Route 9W/Feura Bush Road area in Glenmont.

C. Map Analysis – Sidewalks and Connectivity of Conservation/Recreation Lands

Mr. Leslie presented a map illustrating the existing conservation and recreation lands layers with an existing sidewalks layer. He indicated that a few areas were highlighted that indicated a gap in sidewalk connectivity, which if constructed would better serve neighborhood connections to parks. The members discussed some areas of the Town that would benefit from sidewalk construction.

D. Public Comment on Task 3

- Linda Jasinski suggested attaching the classification acreage table to the legend.
- Lawrence Fahn commented that he was curious as to the acreage of land each Committee Member desired to conserve.
- John Smolinsky suggested creating a matrix to assist in developing the definitions of the map's classifications. He also informed the Members that it is important to look at the future parkland needs of the Town as population increases.
- Debbie Kitchen suggested showing constrained lands (such as slopes and wetlands), which naturally inhibit development.
- David Erik VanLuven said he hoped the Town was not interested in "taking" land from private land owners and felt only lands of "willing" landowners should be pursued.

Other

Ms. Heinzen informed the Committee that she received a digital copy of the Normans Kill Riparian Stream Corridor Study from the Audobon Society of New York. She provided a hard copy of the Study to the Town. She mentioned that the Study scope had changed from the NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program's original grant, and that it mainly consisted of an inventory of existing conditions within a 1-km corridor around the Normans Kill. The Study also indicated several recreational opportunity recommendations. The Study will be emailed to Members for their general information.

Action Items:

- A. In conjunction with Mr. DiPaolo, Mr. Leslie to prepare definitions for the map's land classifications.
- B. In conjunction with Ms. Liebschutz staff to prepare a draft cover memo to the Town Board for the transmittal of the recreation and conservation lands map to complete Task 3. This will also serve as the CACC Quarterly Report to Town Board.
- C. Staff to revise recreation and conservation lands map.
- D. Staff to calculate land classification acreage.
- E. Staff to prepare article for the Town's e-Newsletter CACC Corner series.

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

July 9, 2007 Meeting Record

- F. Staff to edit the Draft Bethlehem Report and submit for inclusion in the August publication.
- G. Staff to post June 11, 2007 meeting record on web site.
- H. Staff to email Normans Kill Riparian Stream Corridor Study to CACC members.
- I. Staff to pursue meeting notices in the Spotlight.
- J. Staff to update CACC members contact list.

Next Meeting:

Monday, August 13, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. in Town Hall Room 101