

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION (CACC)
January 12, 2009 Meeting Record

Members Present:

Libby Liebschutz, Chair; Nancy Heinzen, John Mead, Val Newell, Ted Putney, Mike Waldenmaier, Caleb Wistar

Staff Members Present:

Rob Leslie, Debbie Kitchen
Melissa Barry (Behan Planning Associates)

Chair Report:

- A. **Approval of December 8, 2008 Meeting Record:** Mr. Leslie asked the members if they had any comments or corrections on the draft December 8, 2008 meeting record that was circulated. Hearing none the members voted to approve the meeting record. Mr. Leslie indicated he would post the meeting record to the Town's web site.
- B. **Other**
There was discussion regarding the February 9 CACC meeting. The Committee rescheduled the February CACC meeting to February 2.

Farm and Open Space Protection Program (Open Space Plan):

A. Review/Discuss: Needs, Opportunities and Recommendations

There was discussion on the term "green infrastructure" and what it meant. We decided to table the discussion of the term until after discussion of specific draft recommendations in the Report.

The Committee reviewed the draft Town of Bethlehem Green Infrastructure Framework: Needs Opportunities and Recommendations Report (dated 12-10-08) and had the following comments to the recommendations:

- Recommendation 1: Develop amenity zoning for green infrastructure
 - The Committee suggested adding text regarding the exploration of transfer of development rights. It was indicated that this could be another way of achieving a similar result (to amenity zoning) in the town but should be evaluated as to the costs that may be necessary for the town to develop and administer such a program.
 - It was also suggested to clarify receiving areas as areas where increased growth is desired.
 - A statement that conservation areas and trail projects should be developed with the participation and support of willing landowners should be added to this recommendation.
- Recommendation 2: Update town code and conservation subdivision regulations
 - The Committee suggested clarifying the term "better site design". Ms. Heinzen summarized that "better site design" deals with reducing impervious cover; taking advantage of conservation opportunities; and developing more effective stormwater management.
 - The Town should invite the development community (builders, realtors, etc.) into the discussion regarding the review of the conservation subdivision regulations.
- Recommendation 3: Establish a pathways committee
 - It was noted that the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy had already done extensive work on pathways in the region and should be included on the pathways committee.
 - There was discussion on the potential to establish a separate motorized vehicle pathway committee that would address ATV's and snowmobiles.

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- There was discussion about the definition of Pathways, which was expanded to include road shoulders.
- Recommendation 4: Sponsor/support a landowner forum
 - It was noted that the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy has also conducted forums such as this and should be involved in the planning process for such a forum.
- Recommendation 5: Consider the development of a green infrastructure education series
 - The development of a series of materials should be added to the informational sessions that educate residents on the benefits that green infrastructure provides to the community.
- Recommendation 6: Strengthen town code
 - Regarding dumping, trespassing, and encroachment it was suggested that when developing informational brochures and articles regarding trespassing and encroachment that the information should be connected with the target audience.
- Recommendation 7: Develop a term conservation easement program.
 - It was suggested “Develop” should be changed to “Research/consider the development of...”.
 - The Committee also indicated there should be a fiscal analysis of the impacts of a term conservation easement law to Town residents before such a program is adopted.
- It was suggested that a recommendation to explore the development of a purchase of development rights (PDR) program be added.
- Recommendation 8: Enhanced tree planting in public rights of way
 - It was suggested that tree planting programs should be evaluated with consideration of the future costs of maintenance and upkeep.
- Recommendation 9: Prioritize study areas and document ecological resources
 - Ms. Newell suggested that it would be important to note that no one would enter property to document ecological resources without a property owner’s permission. Ms. Barry confirmed that this was the intent of the recommendation.
- Due to time constraints the committee decided to postpone their review of Recommendations 10 through 15 until the February 2 meeting.

B. Review Discuss Recommendation Prioritization Sheet

The committee did not review the prioritization sheet due to time constraints and determined to place the item on the February agenda.

Other Business:

Mr. Leslie indicated the Supervisor suggested implementing the recommendation for establishing a Pathways Committee as soon as possible. The CACC agreed that there was no need to delay the establishment of a Pathways Committee. It was determined that Mr. Leslie and the Ms. Liebschutz would draft a memo to the Town Board recommending the establishment of a Town Pathways Committee. It is anticipated that the Committee would be established at a Town Board meeting in February.

Public Comment:

Public comments included the following:

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- Concern that the proposed vision map may contradict the goals of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.
- Concern that proposed vision map would include the mapping of proposed trail locations or preserved lands on private property, thereby impacting future development opportunities and ability to obtain property insurance.
Concern that the term green infrastructure has a specific meaning and that the CACC would be endorsing this meaning by using the term

Next Meeting:

February 2, 2009 at 7:00 PM