

Conservation Advisory Commission  
Minutes of May 19, 2011 Meeting

Present: Curt Pueschel, Shepard Bennett, Cynthia Stephens/Westerman, Michael Restuccia, Linda Green

Excused: Steve Appel, Richard Pastore

Minutes of the April 21, 2011 meeting were approved by e-mail on May 2. The next regularly scheduled meeting is on June 16, 2011.

The field trip to Middendorf Park and Rock Road Glen on May 7 was discussed and proofs of the photographs that Steve took were viewed. All members and David Marnicki were able to participate in the Middendorf walk and most were able to go to Rock Road Glen.

The forest in Middendorf Park is dominated by maple, hemlock, and sycamore with very few ash trees. The rich bottomland soils support an impressive variety of wildflowers; Curt identified almost two dozen species, several of which are locally uncommon. Using the GIS resources, we were able to roughly identify the park boundaries. A main sewage line runs the length of the park (north/south) and a branch line comes in from the west; access to these lines has to be maintained. Some concerns were noted. There are scattered piles of trash on the valley floor and possibly more on the slopes. Several aggressive invasive plant species are present, including multiflora rose, Japanese knotweed, barberry, and garlic mustard. We also encountered an active campsite with tents and a fire, and Dave Marnicki informed the occupants that they were on Town property. A management plan for the park should address all these issues, balancing preservation of the valuable natural features with access for citizens and sewer line maintenance.

The walk up Rock Road Glen was impressive, but the status of Rock Road is uncertain. It needs to be determined whether the Town still retains rights to the corridor or if the road is considered abandoned, with rights reverting to the adjacent lot owners. Some riprap, consisting of stones bound in wire mesh, remains. It was probably installed to protect the roadbed but has been undercut and eroded out. If the riprap falls into the streambed, it could alter flow, perhaps increasing erosion on the opposite bank. It should be determined whether the Town has responsibility for disassembling the riprap.

Tentative plans were made for another field trip, this one to Jones Park on June 25 at 10:00. The specific trails to be explored will be decided in the June meeting.

Curt raised a question about whether the CAC has an interest in the proposed Town ordinance regarding wind-driven electric generators that is currently being considered. The proposed ordinance addresses private wind-driven generators, but it does not deal with the possibility of commercial wind farms. Support was expressed for private generators but implementation should ensure minimal adverse effects, such as noise, on neighbors. Commercial generation would be a source of much greater concern for the CAC.

Cindy reported on the public meeting held in the offices of the Town of Binghamton regarding proposed harvesting of timber from county parks. She shared a copy of a letter sent to the County Supervisor from the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The letter states that permission of the State Legislature and compliance with Federal rules on conversion and alienation are required. Failure to do so could result in loss of substantial EPA grants presently in effect.