

Conservation Advisory Commission  
Minutes of October 20, 2011 Meeting

Present: Curt Pueschel, Cynthia Stephens/Westerman, Michael Restuccia, Linda Green, Steve Appel, Victor Lamoureux

Excused: Richard Pastore

Minutes of the August 18, 2011 meeting were previously approved by e-mail. The meeting of September 15, 2011 was cancelled owing to the flood. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on November 17, 2011 in the Board Room. Our plan to meet at the Vestal Public Library to go over documents in the CAC files stored there will have to be put on hold until the meeting rooms are free again. Presently, these rooms are being used by FEMA.

Victor Lamoureux was welcomed as a member of CAC following approval of his appointment by the Town Board.

Only Curt, Dick, and Cindy were able to attend the CAC field trip to the Ford Tract on Friday, August 26. The status of this property was clarified by the sign on the entry gate on Glendale Road which indicates that the property was purchased with funds from the 1996 Clean Water/Clear Air Bond Act and identifies it as Ford Park. The area is geographically complex with some pieces on the east side of the Choconut Creek. Most of the tract is on the west side of the stream and a path follows the sewer line on flat ground. The land rises on a steep slope to the west, but the property line was uncertain. We stayed mostly on the trail. In addition to tree species identified by the forester, we noted a stand of hemlocks and one of hickories, some of them quite large. Apple trees were scattered through the park, and some black locusts were present on the north end. Invasive plant species were abundant, especially honeysuckle, but also Japanese knotweed, multiflora rose, and barberry. A deer hunting platform and two campsites were observed, but it was not clear whether they were on Town property.

Victor reported that he had his Introductory Biology class at Broome Community College census trees within quadrats in both Jones and Middendorf Parks. In Middendorf, the quadrats amounted to ten percent of the park area.

No one was aware of any further assessment reports of Town parks by the forester.

Concern was expressed that natural gas drilling pads will reduce forest cover and may also reduce infiltration of water, both of which would increase stormwater runoff. Members will examine the Environmental Impact Statement for natural gas drilling to see how stormwater runoff is addressed. It was noted that the plans for granting drill permits are being developed at the same time that public comment on the Environmental Impact Statement is still being gathered, rather the process being sequential so that permitting plans can be fully informed by public feedback on the EIS.

A question was asked about the progress of discussion by the Town Board of a road ordinance for heavy truck use in the Town. It was pointed out that the state of the Town's road is critical to

the safety of school buses, whose routes allow little flexibility about the roads traveled. The extent of road damage that has occurred in some jurisdictions would be unacceptable. Other towns are making progress in creating plans to protect their roads.

Steve brought in a copy of the Vestal stream corridor map. He suggested that we examine where the most serious damage occurred in the recent flooding. Members described streambank damage along Choconut Creek, Fuller Hollow Creek, and elsewhere.

Cindy reported that Environmental Management Council is making progress in assembling a county open space plan. In addition to cataloging public open spaces, it will provide information on how to preserve and manage open spaces. Cindy will bring an outline of the plan to our next meeting.

No Planning Board meetings have occurred since our last meeting.