Conservation Advisory Commission

Minutes of the January 16, 2014 Meeting

Present: Curt Pueschel, Shep Bennett, Michael Restuccia, Victor Lamoureux, Steve Appel, and interns Megan Larson and Stephanie Craig

Excused: Cynthia Stephens-Westerman, Cole Moore, Linda Green

Minutes of the December 17th and January 16th meetings were approved by e-mail. The next regular meeting of the CAC will be on February 20, 2014.

We were joined by Megan Larson and Stephanie Craig, Binghamton University graduate students in the Biological Sciences. Megan is a wetlands plant ecologist studying local human-impacted wetland communities. Stephanie studies nitrogen biogeochemistry in stream corridors. Supervisor Schafer will be advised that we have asked Megan and Stephanie to assist the CAC as interns.

Also related to membership, the Town Board plans to take up Adam Flint's application to join the CAC as an alternate member in their next session. Mr. Flint is also willing to serve as our representative to the Environmental Management Council. Curt had met with Adam earlier and described current CAC interests and activities, including our first steps towards developing conservation management plans for Town parks and generating and distributing to the public information about the emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly adelgid, and other recently arrived pests that could affect private and public property in the Town. Adam suggested that we contact Kevin Mathers at Cornell Cooperative Extension as an additional source of literature about the ash borer.

Since the last meeting, Megan found information about the cold sensitivity of the emerald ash borer, which was forwarded to members by e-mail. Studies done in Minnesota reported increased mortality of the borer larvae with decreasing temperatures. This work suggests the recent subzero temperatures in January could be expected to cause on the order of 30 percent mortality of the ash borers. Curt found information indicating that cold snaps in this temperature range will also cause some mortality of the hemlock woolly adelgids. The rate of mortality was not quantified but it may prove to be substantial, and northward spread of the adelgids may be slowed for a year or two.

In discussing the CAC's approach to providing information about the effects of the ash borer and other pests, it was noted that much information is now easily available on the insects pests themselves. However, this information becomes relevant to the landowner only if he or she has the vulnerable species of trees. It was agreed that the CAC should focus our efforts on producing materials on tree identification. Victor has photographed specimens and will mock up some pages.