

Vestal Conservation Advisory Commission  
Minutes of the July 17, 2014 Meeting

Present: Curt Pueschel, Steve Appel, Victor Lamoureux, Cynthia Stephens/Westerman, Michael Restuccia, Adam Flint, and intern Megan Larson

Minutes of the June meeting had been approved by e-mail. The next regular meeting of the CAC is scheduled for August 21, 2014.

Progress on preparing an environmental management plan for Town parks was discussed. After more careful study of the Broome County GIS maps, we have a better understanding of the full extent of the parcels in which Town parks are located; as a result, it is clear that revisits and some reevaluation of our original descriptions of several properties will be needed. For example, study of the parcel maps shows that the wetland adjacent to the Harold Moore Park is owned by the Town, as are two other adjoining parcels; we now recognize that the Town's holdings span the creek from Vestal Road to the Susquehanna River. This is important because we noted in our visit to Moore Park that the stream next to the wetland is downcutting its bed and could eventually compromise the berm separating the stream from the wetland. Given this example and the fact that some parks occupy only a small part of the parcel in which they are located, it was decided that our parks report should deal with full parcels and any Town-owned parcels adjacent to park parcels.

A week ago Curt and Steve walked the trails in Arnold Park, completing the initial round of visits to all the Town Parks. Before today's meeting, Curt and Victor made a follow-up visit to African Road Park to examine the forested part of the parcel on the west side of the Willow Run Creek. Before the next meeting, Curt will compile the park site descriptions that are relatively complete. We can then decide what follow-up visits are necessary to verify the descriptions of features and finish the remaining site descriptions. Finally, we will focus on what recommendations we might make.

The ash and hemlock identification guides being developed with artistic help from a Vestal High student are caught up in a computer crash and their condition needs to be determined. The project was close to completion, and we hope to include a CAC e-mail address on the sheets. Curt will ask again about the status of our request for a Town e-mail address for the CAC.

The recent legal decisions that reasserted the role of local governments in the approval process for development of mineral resources was discussed. It has been almost two years since the CAC submitted a lengthy report of natural gas development to all the members of the Town Board. It was felt that we should review the document, which is available on the Town website at <http://www.vestalny.com/DeptPage.aspx?pID=174>, to see if the information, concerns, and recommendations expressed in that report remain timely or a revised edition is in order. Our report did not deal with the issue of natural gas extraction from under the Town parks. The NY State's interpretation of the concept of alienation prevented attempts to harvest timber in Town parks; based on this concept, the leasing of Town parks for natural gas extraction would likely also constitute alienation even if surface rights were not involved. Adam described a document about health risks of fracking that was published earlier this month by Concerned Health Professionals of NY; he will share an electronic copy with the committee.

Adam reported on several items of interest to the CAC. The 2014 NYS Conference on the Environment will take place at the Doubletree Hotel on Oct 2-4. The three themes around which sessions are being organized are Local Food Systems, Energy Efficiency and Renewables, and

Climate Change: Managing Common Resources and Resilient Communities. Information is being posted at the following website: <http://www.nysacny.org/2014-conference>. The cost of registration is \$95 and includes four meals. Adam also discussed the recent local meeting hosted by New York State Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo about the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program. The Energize NY Commercial Program helps commercial properties make energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades to buildings. Municipalities can also take advantage of the PACE Program. Finally, Adam mentioned that any town that adopts the NYS unified residential solar and electric vehicle charging station permits can receive a NYSERDA incentive of \$2500 for each. He is working with the Southern Tier East Regional Planning and Development Board to support this effort, and would work with the Town towards the adoption of the relevant resolutions.