

Vestal Conservation Advisory Commission  
Minutes of the September 15, 2016 meeting

Present: Curt Pueschel, Cindy Stephens-Westerman, Victor Lamoureux, Steve Appel, Adam Flint

Minutes of the August 18 meeting were approved. The next meeting is scheduled for October 20.

Cindy reviewed recent information about the 1-1 public drinking water well in Vestal on Stage Road. It has been known to be polluted since 1978 and has long been an EPA Superfund site. The EPA plans a new in situ thermal treatment that will use steam to extract volatile organic hydrocarbons, including chloroform and trichloroethylene. Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)-contaminated soil will be excavated and removed. Although the groundwater aquifer has been contaminated, the chemical plume has not reached the Susquehanna River.

Discussion continued on the topic what the CAC is to do in the future. Should we request that the CAC be copied on any activity that requires a full environmental assessment form? The need to respond quickly would pose a major challenge given our once-a-month meeting schedule.

Curt reported on planned developments at the university's Nuthatch Hollow Preserve, which is to be the site of an energy positive building, a so-called living building. Plans also include fencing to exclude deer from all or large parts of the 75 acre preserve.

The offer to donate a strip of land north of Pierce Hill Road adjacent to Arnold Park was noted. Given the steep slope of the property, it should remain in its present state of forest cover to maintain the stability of the slope and not increase storm runoff.

Adam asked about the committee's interest in various initiatives involving solar or other forms of clean energy. Things that might be done include working with the board on the regulator side, helping to organize events to promote shared solar energy, working with school districts in solar-related curricular initiatives for teacher training. We could also link to work being done in the city to promote electric vehicle charging stations. There is a new form of financing for commercial energy improvement called C-PACE that is likely to be passed this fall and which needs to be promoted. The clean energy communities program, just launched by NYSERDA offers incentives to municipalities that enact 4 of 10 climate smart communities measures which include EV, solarize, and CPACE, among others. The funding is in regional allocations and is first-come, first-served, therefore only communities that are proactive will receive funding.