



TOWN OF COLONIE

347 OLD NISKAYUNA ROAD

LATHAM, N.Y. 12110



Conservation Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes of January 5, 2012

Present: Chairman Diane Davies, Counsel Jack Spath and members Don Allard, George Palmer, Ellen Rosano, Laura Weed and Bob Ulrich

Diane Davies called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. Everyone welcomed our new member, Don Allard. George Palmer had already sent Don the founding documents of the Council, and Diane agreed to send him more materials about our work.

The minutes from our previous meeting were moved for adoption with one correction, by Bob Ulrich, and seconded by Ellen Rosano. The correction is that the December Planning board meeting report was delivered by Sudhir Kulkarni, not by George Palmer.

Bob presented the group with a brochure published by the city of Binghamton, NY on the benefits to a community of having many trees. The brochure cites tree benefits such as savings on energy costs, erosion prevention, increased property value, aesthetic improvement of neighborhoods, and counterbalancing of global warming. Binghamton will plant trees for free for anyone who wants them. Bob suggested that we strongly encourage developers to leave trees, especially older and more established ones, on sites that are being developed.

The schedule for the Dec 20 Planning Board meeting included a long-term development on Vly rd. that is finally to be completed after 10 years and the DiBenedetto Dance studio parking lot. Sudhir was scheduled to attend that meeting, but is now in India for a few months, so we will get his report when he returns.

Ellen will attend the January Planning Board Meetings. Diane did the January Bulletin Boards, and will swap them in February. Bob will do the boards in March.

We had one site review to do: The Stewart's Shop re-development at 1218 Troy-Schenectady Rd, at the corner of Vly Rd. The corner was originally poorly designed and suffered from undesirable internal circulation problems. The new design features the replacement of the current 1865 sq. ft. building with a 2990 sq. ft. building, and the addition of three new gas pumps. The green space percentage is only 23%, and that represents an 800 sq.ft. increase over the prior amount of green space on the site. Since the site is grandfathered in at the low green space percentage, we cannot require the developer to produce more green space, but we strongly encourage them to do so. Perhaps green walls or fencing might be used to improve the green space on the site.

Our trees are ordered for Conservation Day, Saturday, May 5th. We will gather on Friday night to pack the trees. Sue Pezzola, the master gardener from Cornell Cooperative extension will attend the event to advise participants on gardening issues. Diane Davies reminded us that Service Berry is the Town Tree and suggested that we also check out the NYS DEC's tree web site.

Several council members are checking with local nurseries for advice on native plantings, but are finding that many of the nurseries are now closed for the winter, and the staff are on vacation. These members will revisit the nurseries when they re-open. Diane is checking on Faddegon's, Ellen is checking with Nagengast Landscaping, and Sudhir is checking with George's. Diane reminded us that native plants are low in cost, low in water usage, pest resistant, non-invasive and erosion preventive. Bob suggested that we encourage foliage preservation on development sites and also suggested that we could do more public workshops to educate the public on the benefits of native planting.

Everyone liked the idea of doing more educational workshops for the public, perhaps on other topics, as well. We will think about what topics we might like to do and discuss them at a subsequent meeting.

At 8:15 the motion to adjourn was made by George and seconded by Ellen.

Respectfully submitted by Laura Weed. 1/17/2012