

MAMARONECK COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
Minutes of January 17, 2023 Meeting

Members Present: David Freeman (Chair), Lou Young (Trustee), Mandy Forlenza Sticos, Dan Kushnick, Liam Robb O'Hagan, Renee Crabtree, Christi Young, Katherine Dehais, Jen LeClair, Lindsay Reitzes, Debbie Sullivan. **Guests:** George Latimer (County Executive), Ellen Silver (CSC Task Force Chair), John Zeiger (Westchester Land Trust).

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. at the VOM Courthouse.

Minutes of December 19, 2022 Meeting were approved.

Tim Whitney Resignation; possible successors.

David proposed and a resolution was unanimously approved thanking Tim for his service and encouraging him to reapply to the Committee when his circumstances allow. Dinah Koehler sent a CV and letter to the Committee expressing interest in joining. Several members of the committee endorsed her candidacy. Lou will follow up with the BoT.

Clean Energy Community/Climate Smart Community.

- **Ellen gave an update of the Task Force's last meeting.** The focus is on becoming a Bronze Climate Smart Community. There are 40 Bronze CSCs in NY State and 15 in Westchester. April 7th is the next date to submit for Bronze status. Currently 8 actions are completed totaling 89 points; 120 are needed. Three actions must be designated as Priority Actions. Greenhouse Gas Inventory should be completed by this week. Alternative Fuel Infrastructure is in process. The VOM is close to signing with Blink, the company which will install, own and operate the EV stations. It is unclear if they will be installed in time to meet the April 7th submission deadline. Dan Sarnoff is to follow up on this. The Comprehensive Plan, a third Priority Action, is unlikely to be completed in time, so a third Priority Action is needed.. The Government Building Energy Audit is a possibility.
- **Recommendation regarding solar panels on VOM buildings.** Dan Sarnoff suggested at the CSC Task Force meeting, that the CFTE send a resolution to the BoT to help the Village move forward on this initiative. The Committee unanimously approved the following resolution to be sent to Dan and Lou, to be brought before the BoT:

The Committee for the Environment encourages the Village of Mamaroneck Board of Trustees to install solar panels on Village buildings and parking canopies in an effort to decrease our dependence on fossil fuels and lessen our contribution to global warming.

- **Unified Solar Permit.** Dan will follow up with the Building Inspector.

George Latimer spoke about the State DEC and the Environmental Bond Act. There will be local forums so that regions can apply for funding for projects, especially for flood resilience and to assist people of color. He encouraged CFTE to have representation at these meetings. The Committee asked about getting some movement on Taylor's Lane. George suggested sending a letter to him with the specifics of the help we are looking for. There was a discussion about the delay in approval of dredging permits; Lou will send us a copy of the dredging plan. .

Other Updates

Prior Resolutions

- **Junior Committee Members.** Given the high volume of work of the BoT, the Committee decided to table this item for now.
- **Leave the Leaves.** Lou reports that this is likely to be taken up at the next BoT meeting.
- **Update Sanitation Brochures.** The Committee asks that our Composting and Leave the Leaves reminders be added to the Recycle Right Westchester App as well as to the Brochure which come out in the Fall. Jerry will contact the DPW about this.

Proposed Gas-powered Leaf Blower Buyback has been approved in principle by the BoT and will be voted upon at the next BoT meeting.

Campaign for EnergySmart Homes. Jerry and Dan still need to get back to Debbie with feedback on the Scoping Document. The document will then need to be approved by NYSERDA before the Campaign can begin. The Committee felt it was best to wait to start the Campaign when Debbie returns from vacation on March 15. There are some incentives for heat pumps under the Inflation Reduction Act, but there are no current Con Ed incentives. Lauren Brois of Sustainable Westchester has said that these may be coming.

Rockland Pocket.

The BoT, on January 23, needs to pass a resolution for the Pocket to be designated as a park. Once designated, it cannot be returned to a non-park use without an act of the State Legislature. Jerry agreed to plant village trees in the first half of April and to give \$700 for spring plants, which will all be native. Kate has ordered 250 plugs through Bedford Healthy Yards and 250 bare root shrubs from DEC Saratoga. They will need sleeves for protection. She will discuss with the Washingtonville Association to plant any excess pussy willow shrubs and dogwoods in the Washingtonville area. Mowing and weeding will be done at the beginning of April. Once designated, a wooden sign will be made for the park.

The 3.6 acre area on the other side of the Sheldrake River, the Thruway-Sheldrake Birdwalk, was explored in a site walk by Kate, Mandy, Lou and Sandra Morrissey, the President of the Bronx River Sound Shore Audubon. The plan is to create a bird sanctuary

with a path with signage, dig out invasives and replant with native shrubs attractive to birds. Audubon is able to give a \$3,000 grant for site work and planting. The plants can improve this area's functioning as a wetland.

Mayor's Monarch Pledge. Mandy has asked the Mayor to sign the pledge for this year.

D.E.C. Food Scrap Grant. This was not pursued, and the time for applying has lapsed.

New Signage for Food Scrap Program. Lou will follow up with Jerry.

Short Street Bridge. A letter supporting this project was sent to the BoT.

Otter Creek

Presentation by John Zeigler, Preserve Manager for the Westchester Land Trust. The Trust manages 35 properties in Westchester and Putnam Counties. Otter Creek is 40 acres; much is wetland. A large restoration project done about 6 years ago undertook to cut out vines, uproot shrubs and plant 650 trees. Some of those trees are now 35-40 feet tall; 70% of the trees survived. John stressed that a maintenance plan is essential to insure success. At the beginning, watering trees is important. Removal of vines is ongoing. There was a discussion of controlling Japanese Knotweed; shading out is a great option, as it is for other invasives.

Dates for Public Events.

The Library is having a Tree Planting Event March 25 and have asked us to be involved. Mandy will follow up.

Clean and Green will be on April 29, rain date April 30. The Committee decided to move the event to Columbus Park which needs more attention than Harbor Island Park. Mandy will contact Jerry and the Parks Department about the date and location. Dan will follow up about scheduling the shredder. The compost giveaway needs to be coordinated. A possible name change for the event was discussed.

Monarch Festival will be on September 30, rain date October 1. Mandy will coordinate with the Parks Dept. The Committee discussed including other sustainability topics, in effect making this event an environmental fair.

Composting Event with the Library. Jen will follow up.

Next meeting: David will follow up with Robert to move the meeting to Wednesday March 1 from February 21 due to member schedules. The Subcommittees' strategic plans and the delay with dredging permits will be on the agenda for this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25.

Respectfully submitted

Debbie Sullivan