

Meeting notes Town of Gallatin CAC

October

Attendees: Eli Arnow, Carol Smillie, Nancy Kuster, Harry Franklin, Stixxx

Approve prior minutes

### **NRI Discussion**

Eli Scheduled a meeting for 10/16/2023 with Jamie Purinton re Ancram's NRI. The constraints are money and time

We have a rough budget of \$30,000 - \$35,000

For private fundraising, we should create a list of potential donors. Note, this a Town report/document by and for the town.

### **Website Discussion**

We need a launch announcement, Goal before the next meeting.

Who will create this and distribute to the various emails and Instagram?

**New Members needed.** Matthew and Avalon resigned.

Create a list of potential interested and qualified persons, need for next meeting to ask the board to request the appropriate solicitation for new members. Suggest staggered terms (2 years and 3 years), so everyone is not re-appointed at the same time. How are other boards done?

Also need a Climate Smart town rep for the County Climate Smart

### **Punch Brook**

Emily Vail needed Comp plan and zoning laws. Eli sent and Carol followed up with additional links to Emily.

9.11.23 CAC minutes:

Present: Nancy, Carol, Stixxx, Harry, Eli

### **NRI grants and fundraising**

There are a couple grant possibilities to consider. We need to research for clarification on potential grants. **Group should put together a list of potential grants (pros, cons, match requirements, deadlines)**

One is the upcoming Greenway Grant (Town of Gallatin plans to apply for that for a lawyer to review zoning)

Discussed fundraising and working with the GRA (Tara is reviving)

Prior to fundraising we need to have a more concrete idea of the NRI/OSP budget. Need to collect formal bids to do the NRI with at least a couple of proposals.

Carol talked to Karen Strong and she will provide a bid

Request from Nan Stolzenburg.

### **Eli to reach out to Jim Nortgren for a formal proposal.**

Need to have Interviews with all NRI consultants before agreeing to go with one. Need to understand the full task scope , including costs over and above consultant fees (publication cost, outreach and education costs etc.) [Nancy shared notes from conversations with Ancram and New Lebanon](#) but there is no indication of costs over and above consulting fees. **Eli to reach out to Ancram and New Lebanon for clarity around this.**

Fundraising plan– keep the funding pool smaller. One idea is to put together a fundraising packet with a couple of the most relevant maps (biodiversity corridor and wetlands map). Another idea is to hold an in person fundraising event where we invite a select group of folks. Could have a set of maps, with most relevant overlays, to present at this event. Or even a 3D map with select overlays.

### **Website**

[Check new website](#) that Stixxx created and provide feedback to Stixxx ASAP. Initial comments from group during the meeting: Add CSC page (with Tara's help), add maps, Instagram live feed, email signup page, prior meeting minutes, events page.

### **TO DO:**

Eli: email Jim Nortgren, talk to Tara about GRA fundraising and strategy, put together a list of folks with Harry, confirm NRI additional costs with Ancram and New Lebanon.

Group Review different grants out there and what the requirements are,

Carol 2 NRI consultant proposals, email Nan about printing maps

### **Everyone look at the DEC NRI guidelines**

Stixxx: make suggested changes to website

CAC minutes from 8.14 meeting

Members present: Eli, Carol, Harry, Ben, Nancy, Avalon

Previous meeting minutes approved.

Discussion from meeting with John Reilly on NRI funding:

The town could provide up to 15-20k and gave us the go ahead to fundraise through the Gallatin Residents Association or another sponsor. Carol to meet with Tim McHenry tomorrow. There needs to be a nonprofit fiscal sponsor, but the GRA is not currently active..

We are also open to grant opportunities. We just missed a big DEC grant deadline because it was too heavy of a lift and also because the town needed to close out the comp plan grant.

Note, the town may be pursuing a DEC grant for assistance with zoning review which may conflict with a DEC grant award for an NRI.

Tomorrow at the board meeting we'll tell the town that we are looking into alternative funding outside of a grant. We need to make it clear that pursuing an NRI is important because preserving Gallatin's natural resources is the number one item that came out of the comp plan.

Columbia Land Conservancy sponsored an impressive Taghkanic watershed conservation plan done by Karen Strong (who we can reach out to). CLC is planning to do a county wide Conservation Plan which is a step toward eventual efforts to lobby for a Real Estate transfer tax. Call Christine Vanderlaan at DEC to talk to her about upcoming DEC grants. We still need assistance with grants and to get additional quotes from contractors.

**CAROL TO GET A QUOTE FROM NAN Stotzburg and CAROL TO ALSO CALL KAREN STRONG.** We need to have more formal proposals as the next stage in the process of the NRI/OSP.

Fundraising:

We need a handful of \$5k prospects and we can ask the town for the remainder. GRA does exist, it's a shell, it's a 501c3. Tara is looking for a new board.

Website

Consensus that the website's look and feel needs to be updated. Will communicate with Stixxx on this. Need to add a page for the CSC- Tara to add a page.

GCA planting project: Scheduled for 8.16 at 8am.

Columbia County climate planning survey is online and we should all take it. CSC sent to Lisa again to distribute to the town.

Need to compile a list of all the people who've ever shown up at a CAC meeting or one of our events in order to have a complete list of folks who participate and remain interested in CAC activities.

**Harry to look into the DEC greenway grant**

CAC minutes July 10. 2023

Present: Eli, Carol, Nancy, Avalon

Guests: Tara

Approval of last meeting's minutes

### **Website discussion**

We will be building a new website that will also host a CSC page. Consensus is that the current layout does not reflect the image we want (the drone shots are interesting but dark for the background, many graphics are hard to read, hyperlinks do not work). There is some good copy and good ideas to keep.

Tara would like to join the CAC and help build the website. We are looking for additional members..

### **NRI Discussion**

Gallatin residents want open space and prioritize our natural resources. The Comprehensive plan, survey and our CAC mission statement, as well as NY law all support this. The town board approved a CAC NRI grant when there was no cost. All of this establishes the commitment for a town wide NRI/Open Space plan.

Next steps for the NRI

- continue getting proposals
- seeking applicable grants
- We will ask John Reilly about constraints around fundraising
- Fundraising activity ideas: Cocktails and outdoor movie (<https://backyardwildernessfilm.com/>) or Garden tours
- Ask person at CLC who's writing the grants for CLC if he would freelance to write grants for us and what it would cost. Ask Lisa her fee.
- Need Jim's estimate in writing and due diligence why it's good to pick him. Note he said we should build in extra money to pay field biologists to do studies of special habitats (Ask Jay Lorenz of Ancram re wetlands).
- Cannot use climate smart money for NRI because it has to be energy related, but if we give that money to the town, they should give us the same amount back unrestricted

**CLC wants a letter of support** for their grant application towards a county wide conservation plan. The goal is to ultimately use this plan to lobby Albany to allow towns to implement a real estate transfer tax. This request was forwarded to John Reilly  
Towns should have a plan in place for when this happens (Conservation and affordable housing).

### **Deer exclosure planting project**

When plants are delivered to Carol's house (probably by 7/15) will need to organize a few hours to pot up plants and figure out planting event(s).

Stixxx said that he has a pump for water

**Next Steps:**

**Create a CAC budget - the next budget meeting is in August**

*Draft Budget:*

*Website fees - \$250/yr*

*NRI ~\$30k minus whatever grant funds we get*

*Events - \$1000 including snacks*

*Printing and mailing - \$2000 per mailing, ideally would have \$4k here*

Eli put this budget in a nice format and send it to Reilly

References for Jim Norgren (NRI consultant)

Carol will reach out to K Strong for another NRI consultant for an estimate

Stixxx to give Eli ownership of the website and domain name

<https://support.squarespace.com/hc/en-us/articles/206537197-Changing-site-ownership>

Find new recruits (Harry, Matt and Avalon to reach out to contacts)

CAC meeting 6.12.23

Members present: Eli, Carol, Nancy, Ben, Stixxx, Avalon

We need clarification about our responsibility for public meeting laws

GCA deer enclosure planting project:

A portion of the plants have been ordered for the planting project at the GCA. 195 plants to be delivered to Carol's house. Carol will get an email a couple days ahead from Barry that he's shipping them. It will all be bare root. Need to get a day on the calendar for the planting day. Need to figure out a way to pump water from the river to the site (Stixxx has a pump). Assume planting pretty soon after bare root plants arrive. Some stuff will be super tiny, so we might want to pot it up. Need to determine remaining funds and purchase additional plants and materials.

NRI update

Eli and Carol talked with Jim Nordgren who was recommended by Colleen Lutz who works for NYNHP. Jim is one of the only NRI providers now since Hudsonia has stopped. Great conversation and he seems like a great fit. Jim suggested that we could also hire consultants to inventory specific special habitats, if we find a few critical environmental areas that need support from e.g. a wildlife or pollinator expert to ID species of concern.

DEC grant discussion

DEC has a grant with a July deadline. The available range is \$10-75K, Minimum 15% match, applicants that provide >30% match may be prioritized.

Likely we should go for ~25k - we need money for printing, events, etc

We do not have a grant writer, but we might be able to DIY it. Will ask the town board about support for hiring grant writer at the next TB meeting. Alternatively - can we privately fundraise for this within the town and ask for a town match. We should ask John what he thinks the town would prefer to do: pay a grant writer or privately fundraise? There is another 50/50 grant out there that we need to look into. Next steps: Talk to the town about support for helping with NRI costs (fund grant writer and NRI matching).

Update - Town requests that we create a budget

Agenda items not addressed at length:

Website - Stixxx just updated it a bit, Harry likes the Taconic website so Stixxx put a new photo on the homepage from drone footage. Looking for final feedback and suggestions.

Everybody by the next meeting email feedback to Stixxx and if you don't do that we will assume you are fine with it as it is

Gallatincac.org - look at it on mobile and on desktop

When you email feedback, send to whole group so others can see

Deer signage for GCA enclosure - Eli will get pricing for the sign to go at the conversation area

## **CAC Minutes 5.8.23**

Members present

Eli Arnov, Carol Smillie, Nancy Kuster, Harry Franklin, Stixxx, Avalon Bunge (secretary)

Approval of April minutes

Building a CAC mailing list

We can use signups to do outreach, Stixxx can put it in a mailchimp. Signups compiled this year to be added to our mailing list. Build list by adding local contacts who might be interested in our work/outreach.

**ACTION ITEM: CAC to send Eli email addresses to add to the mailing list**

Discussion around uses of \$5k grant coming from CSC heat pump initiative that we can use for anything environmental and climate smart, Carol proposes that we use this money to do town communications, in a way that would benefit the town and CSC.

CSC is starting a new campaign for community solar signups, they need 5-10 signups. Carol will let us know when all the paperwork is in order for everyone to sign up. With 5-10 signups the Town is eligible for another \$5k.

Next phase of the project at the conservation area is the planting effort at the GCA deer enclosure. Carol to check in with plant supplier for shipping timing.

Educational sign for the deer enclosure. For the next meeting Eli needs to put together a draft sign and send it around for final approval.

No Mow May outreach discussion

Messaging around native plants nurture native bees should be the focus, not simply "do not mow." Point folks to where they can buy native plants. Let's find an existing graphic that goes this direction. Encourage people to get on the HNP map. ACTION ITEM: Need to find an existing graphic and come up with supplementary message to put under the graphic, circulate it to the group once, and then have it posted.

NRI discussion

Eli reached out again to the two NRI groups he had reached out to previously and no response. Will reach out to Colleen Lutz of NY Natural Heritage Program and see if she might have a connection.

Discussion around building a shared calendar of events with neighboring towns- Copake, Taghkanic and Ancram. Should contact Doug of Taghkanic and discuss.

4.10.23

CAC Minutes

Members present:

Harry Franklin, Matt Stintchcomb, Carol Smilie, Eli Arnow, Stixxx D'Armiento, Avalon Bunge (secretary),

Guest: Tim McHenry

Discussion about upcoming Earth Day weekend events. Will do GCA trail cleanup and Deer Exclosure grant project on April 22 and Gallatin street cleanup on April 23. Both days from 9am to 1pm.

Discussion of prep needed for both days.

Lake Taghkanic trail day discussion. Timing TBD. What they'll want to know is how many people might show up because they'll be bringing materials like gravel or wood chips to spread, maybe planks for the muddy areas

Climate Smart Committee will target a couple Saturday mornings to have a table at the Gallatin transfer station to promote the Clean Energy campaign.

Other events we should help promote in May: Copake is doing a Doug Tallamy presentation at the Copake grange, and Claverack library is having a Homegrown National Park video panel. May 20<sup>th</sup> there is a community pollinator planting event at the Taghkanic town hall.

NRI Update: Eli emailed the two planning firms recommended by Gretchen Stevens of Hudsonia, no response, will follow up. Behan Planning and Design looks like best option, they do NRIs and Open Space Protection plans. The other company looks like they pretty much only work in urban areas, they are called AKRF

Website update: Stixxx is working on website. Needs feedback from group for discussion at next meeting.

March 13, 2023

Town of Gallatin CAC Minutes

Members Present: Eli Arnow (Chair), Carol Smillie, Nancy Kuster, Stixxx D'Armentio, Harry Franklin, Ben Maron, Avalon Bunge (Secretary)

Guests Present: Lucy Trabelus

Approval of Minutes from Feb 6 meeting

We should have a running resource document that lists what types of events and information we are posting on Instagram, this will be needed for the climate scoping work

Climate Smart Committee update:

- Climate smart application has been reviewed by the DEC and signed off; clean heat has also signed off
- Eli and Carol participated in a meeting hosted by Doug Craig of town of Taghkanic, which brought together the CSCs of southern Columbia County to bring groups together, join forces and work on how to co-promote and co-organize events around heat pumps and other climate issues
- CSCs are thinking about getting a table at the Gallatin transfer station on Saturday mornings to promote our events and resources
- Considering doing house tours of heat pump systems to educate town residents
- At the recent heat pump webinar was became clear that there are lack of local contractors participating in the NYSERDA incentive program; Harry could bring in the contractor that did his heat pump system to present at or attend an event. Harry to send contractor's contact info to Carol.
- Doug created a calendar for the different towns, which currently just includes CSC/energy related events. In the future may branch out to CAC/conservation related things
- Is there anything similar to what Doug has set up for Southern Columbia County CSCs that will be focused on CAC activities? Eli originally felt the shared calendar thing would be covering both (CAC and CSC activities) – Eli to talk to Doug about this, but probably we can just use the calendar for both types of activities

3 events coming up:

Deer enclosure @ conservation area + Road cleanup – Earth Day

- Update on deer enclosure stuff: Eli and Carol put together a plant list with input from Farmscape Ecology; Carol to send that out to her nursery contacts to see what they can source, and then the order will be placed this week
- Not necessarily clear when plants will be delivered and there may be some plants that are tiny and need to be grown on
- There will be a lot of bare root trilliums in the order that could get planted that day. But even if we don't plant that day (the 22<sup>nd</sup>) there will be a lot of other site work that needs to be done

- We are going to have to get the town board final sign off on this at their next board meeting. Eli to present work and get sign off at next Town Board meeting.
- How are we going to get people to come? Dem list (Harry), Republican list (Fraser), Gallatin residents' association (Tim) and Town list (Lisa) can all be good sources of outreach
- Signup template was made by Matt last year – Matt should be able to share with Eli and they can update it this year. We will need to make a poster for the website that Matt used last year; and then push that out in emails to the above lists along with the link to sign up for a street to clean.
- Stixxx plans to do a quick trial run with his drone so he can do a cool video of doing the deer enclosure and again at the trail day, so maybe the day before the enclosure day a few folks can go down and scope out the scene and do a little pre-work for getting the fence up, figure out where the fence is actually going
- We've also thrown around the idea of putting up a sign on the enclosure with a QR code that links to the video. We could also send an existing "why enclosures" video around with our signup link/invite to start explaining this work to people.

#### Trail work at Lake Taghkanic –

- This to be a May event, but we also need to get this in front of the Town Board,
- Ben still needs to ask his contact for a good trail date – the date mentioned last time was Riverkeeper Sweep and not a good weekend for Ben outside of that. The park would probably want us to do it before they officially open on Memorial Day. The 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> of May might be best. The weekend before that is Mother's Day and the weekend after is memorial day. And if we could say that we will do a guided walk with the CAC before we do the cleanup then that would be a great draw to the park. We could even run multiple tours that all depart from the same spot

#### NRI

- Eli talked to Gretchen Stevens of Hudsonia on the 9<sup>th</sup> but unfortunately she is retiring. She is the only person there capable of doing NRIs and she has no replacement yet. So it doesn't seem like they will be able to do it anytime soon. They are looking for replacements but no luck yet.
- There are other consulting and planning firms that she doesn't believe have yet done NRIs but might potentially be able to do it if they hired a biologist or ecologist as an additional consultant. She gave Eli two names: Behan Planning and Design and AKRF. Both have actually done Open Space Plans though not NRIs. Eli will be reaching out to talk to them about doing an NRI or NRI/OSP combo.
- Gretchen says that NRIs these days cost \$42-48k, they are finishing up Milan's at \$42k. This price range doesn't include much fieldwork at all, mostly just mapping. Eli did emphasize we are interested in more fieldwork, like Ancram did.
- Eli to set up some times with both of the groups that have been suggested and circulate the times to the rest of the CAC to see if anyone else wants to join.

#### Last item of business: Website

Stixxx to work on the website, polish it up and get it ready for April events, people who attend our events to sign up for our list. Eli will be checking the CAC gmail once a week. Mailchimp is free for up to 500 subscribers so it is free for the time being.

Town of Gallatin CAC Minutes  
March 13, 2023

Members Present: Eli Arnow (Chair), Benjamin Maron, Carol Smillie, Nancy Kuster, Harry Franklin, Avalon Bunge (Secretary)

Guests Present: Todd

Minutes approved

### **Climate Smart Community Discussion**

CSC wants to be a task force of the CAC and stay part of the group and be adjunct to it

Projects to pursue: Feb 28 County CSC presentation on heat pumps. Background info on heat pumps, rebates are available, list of vetted contractors covered at this Feb 28 event. Recording found here: <https://youtu.be/U0HfzvWjuYM>

Lisa has already sent out info about this event.

There are two different clean energy laws: one pertains to home energy audits which would be a separate action for this group and could be another community campaign we could do. When you do a community campaign the town gets a \$5000 bonus. Our CSC is working on a scoping document saying we'll piggyback on the county effort.

### **Spring plans**

Ben reached out to Taghkanic State Park director to do Lake Taghkanic trail work. Possible work days could coincide with "I love my park day in NYS." Need to communicate our plans and scope with him. Thinking to start from where the trail starts at the Pond Lily entrance. Group likes it and thinks it would be a great tie in with the fact that Gallatin is offering empire passes which people don't know about so a great way to enhance the use of the park in the community. If it's the first Saturday in May that's riverkeeper sweep which isn't ideal. Ben to confirm when it is.

Nancy: we could make a trail group schedule and have people sign up for it, friends of Lake Taghkanic type initiative, the park is a great resource and can be a resource for the community. Lisa is very involved in the rail trail and she could get people involved too. Will talk to Lisa about this.

Eli reached out to Farmscape Ecology for deer enclosure plants, they gave a huge plant list, looks like it will be hard to get a lot of the things, but will work with Carol to do it. April 22 possible work date for GCA deer enclosure project. Pair the event with the annual street cleanup effort. Eli to order all materials. Create posters and outreach materials. Need to run this by the town board – Eli to get this on the agenda along with Ben's trail maintenance idea

Make a little fact sheet to hand out to participants how to do this, why deer enclosures, little mini budget, sourcing, etc. Videotaping the why and how to and putting a QR code on the sign by the deer enclosure so people can watch it whenever. Possibly put a little sign at top of parking lot: Head down the hill to check out the Gallatin CAC's enclosure and native planting!

Pat is officially our liaison to the TB now.

## **NRI**

Eli had some communication with Hudsonia, they got back quickly and put him in touch with Gretchen Stevens and he's waiting on them to get back to him

March 1 webinar on navigating municipal grant funding from Hudson River Watershed Alliance

Taghkanic is also working on NRI and it would make a lot of sense to join forces with them rather than reinvent the same wheel. Talk to Hudsonia to see if they would do two towns at once. Opportunity to work with neighboring towns to co-sponsor local events and outreach.

Town of Gallatin CAC Minutes  
January 9, 2023

Members Present: Eli Arnow (Chair), Benjamin Maron, Carol Smillie, Nancy Kuster, Harry Franklin, Matthew Stinchcomb, Avalon Bunge (Secretary)

Guests Present: Richie Hilton, Tim McHenry

December minutes cannot be approved because final version has not been distributed; approval to take place in Feb

Updates and Upcoming Events

- Eli sent end of year report and newsletter to Lisa; newsletter has been distributed to town residents via email
- Nancy: Garden/Farming club in Ancram will be having a meeting on Jan 14<sup>th</sup> at town hall, next sat, which will include presentation on composting with Amelia from the O Zone
- Bard College is doing a sustainable landscaping for pollinators webinar
- Eli shares a Columbia Land Conservancy webinar on Homegrown National Park
- Carol looking for names of “green” architects for Town Hall; Nancy to share contact with Carol

Carol’s update on Climate Smart Communities:

- First meeting has taken place and groundwork has been laid; Hailey (CSC rep) to join next meeting
- Potential first “points” may include efforts around community solar, comprehensive plan, NRI, EV charging, community campaigns for clean heating and cooling
- Harry mentions partnering with solar installer around community solar efforts; will get contact info for local installer to Carol
- Tim believes Gallatin has ~5 more participant spots to reach community solar quota
- Climate vulnerability assessment also being done at the county level, facilitated by Pat O’Dell; first meeting via zoom will take place between Jan 24-28
- CSC will assign group member to focus on local roads to increase walking and biking opportunities.

NRI

- Technical assistance grant from DEC was declined
- Rejection letter mentioned local stewardship planning grant from DEC to be announced in the spring and noted intermunicipal projects are favored in the app scoring system, so potential to collaborate Copake again, but deadline is not clear.
- Eli to reach out to see if can get any feedback on the rejection, get a call with Christine for the group to learn how to improve in future, CC Lisa, Christie, Carol
- The big grant that Ingrid has mentioned, \$50-70k, will be announced in April
- Group discusses potential benefit to applying for largest possible grant and combining NRI with Open Space Plan
- Next steps: Eli to email Hudsonia to reopen getting a proposal and see if they have examples of grant apps, CC Lisa, Christie, Carol

- Note that due diligence has already been done: group reached out to Farmscape Ecology Program and Scenic Hudson in the past as well as Hudsonia, but Hudsonia was and remains best fit

#### Member appointments

- All members present confirm commitment to being reappointed
- Avalon would like to become official member as well as secretary
- Matt will connect Eli with 1-2 potential new members

#### Spring Events:

- Earth Day: If receive Ecological Restoration Grant, we can plan to do the install of the deer enclosure; or if we don't get it can do a cleanup and walk at conservation area around this time
- Can reach out to the town board for support if don't get the grant
- This would be the third year of the street cleanup if we continue it; maybe want to do something educational in addition to that. Example: Discuss possibility of hosting site visits to see ecological landscapes in action.
- **Matt** will think about some kind of after-event post cleanup to make a more robust offering.
- Many local towns have recently been involved in No Mow May; we could use earth day to kick that off, could do a big push around No Mow May and start drumming up interest immediately
  - Potential to have people register on CAC website and create mini-campaign
- Tim: One of the most coalescing things is food and drink! The nominal Gallatin Residents Association still has about \$1k in its bank account and it would be great to splurge on some food and beverages & a venue that's big enough to hold people and celebrate the road cleanup etc – GRA in process of wrapping up, so could be a good use of remaining funds
- Events at private home, barn, etc are always popular; venue needs to be able to handle inclement weather
- In the past the biggest cost has been actually getting the information out there, postcards are expensive and they don't actually bring anyone in historically; word of mouth is still best option
- Explore use of Elliot Spitzer's new riding stable (not at his home)
- Group also wants to do a walk at Lake Taghkanic which is easy access, free, and could be done with less lead time; but probably after mud season is best for scheduling
- Once the weather gets nice, could add on additional outdoor activities to public CAC monthly meetings

Next meeting to take place WEDNESDAY Feb 15