

Meeting minutes Town of Gallatin CAC

January 7, 2024

Attendees: Eli Arnow, Carol Smillie, Ben Maron, Nancy Kuster, Annabel Roberts McMichael, Stixxx D'Armiento

Approved prior minutes

Reviewed the year end CAC report and goals for 2024

Current town environmental issues:

Concerns along the Doove Kill (and releases from Lake Taghkanic) due to flooding, manure runoff, as well as other stormwater pollutant issues.

Issue on Mill Hill Rd. and elsewhere that road salt goes into the stream. The amounts are regulated at the state level. The Cary Institute has information on alternatives and the town highway department is following regulations including lowered speed limits to reduce road salt requirements.

Germantown has had some success working with the Highway Dept and around mowing regimens (invite him to a meeting). Talk to Germantown, Carol will follow up with Barbara Hughey about what they have done. We will invite her to our next meeting (or possibly a town board meeting).

Carol can work on a stormwater PowerPoint. Watershed Alliance has a handbook. We should reach out and talk to residents about flooding issues.

Reviewed suggestions for 2024 goals:

Talked about newsletter topics. Possibly Dark Skies issues.

Website launch needs to be announced. Stixxx will send ideas to Ben and then we will share for comment. Carol will follow up with Tara on CSC page for website.

Lake Taghkanic trail cleanup. Ben will reach out to the park and Taghkanic CAC to get their participation.

NRI Carol will reach out to Nan after we make an outline for the NRI. Then proceed to get proposals. Need to get approval from the town board on fundraising and ask the Town to budget money or get grants.

Carol gave an update on CSC activities and grants that we got and what we will do with it (within 3 mos.). Create a Sustainability Fund and possibly a paid Sustainability Coordinator position. Carol thinks we should do the NRI before we do the Zoning Review because you need to know what you have to make decisions.

Members need to sign up for (Harassment and Discrimination) training.

Put out the word that we would like another member to join the CAC.

Meeting notes Town of Gallatin CAC

February 12, 2024

Attendees: Eli, Carol, Nancy, Stixxx, Tara, Harry, Ben, Annabel

Approve prior minutes

Stixxx sent an email blast for the website launch (thank you AI). Edited by the group. Stixxx wants us to subscribe to run tests. (It goes to our Mailchimp acct). Let friends and neighbors know and invite them. Ask people to sign up for info and events. Send to people who attended previous events.

Event ideas (Eli will send out draft):

1. Earth Day- Gallatin Road Clean Up. Conservation Area Activity-Deer enclosure education and trail maintenance
2. Gallatin Conservation Area. Work on Trail
3. Clean Heating -Taghkanic is sponsoring
4. Lake Taghkanic Trail Cleanup- include other towns. Ben will get a date
5. Gallatin Residents Picnic July 13th Tara recommends a CAC event. Annabel will lead a walk on important resources that we want to preserve.
6. Annabel suggested providing info on grants and funding for residents for their property- such as NRCS and Trees for Tribs

Posting and sending out events that other towns are doing discussion.

Eli will be the point person for things to be passed to the town Clerk, Lisa DeLeeuw

Checking that everyone did Workplace Violence and Sexual Harassment webinar

Harry recommends Composting info

Possibly hire Farmscape Ecology to do a walk

We will send out an email blast with a follow up of events. Include our names when we sign off.

Tara will send content for the CSC page.

Carol let us know about the CSC grants

NRI is a priority and needs to be moved forward. Tara met with Gwen about raising money. Carol said we need to interview people we have proposals from. Need commitment from John that he will match funds. Tara, Carol and Eli to go through details. Carol will call Nan (Comprehensive Plan consultant).

March 11, 2024 Meeting notes Town of Gallatin CAC

Attendees: Eli Arnow, Carol Smillie, Ben Maron, Nancy Kuster, Stixxx D'Armiento, Harry Franklin Tara Silberberg

Approve prior minutes

Nancy reported on the Punch Brook/Roe Jan meeting March 1st. They presented the new maps which are very comprehensive

The previous 664 Wetlands existing "mapped" was missing about 1 million acres (which have not been protected yet). It left out small wetlands, unusual/important circumstances (floods, rare plants, habitats, vernal pools)

NRI

Eli, Tara, Carol and Annabel met Jim Nordgren (JN Landtrust Services)

Quote \$15,000: Includes community outreach, walks and 200hrs "boots on the ground". He can make custom maps. Lots of great ideas. He was very prepared and was ready to go. He wants to loop in Bard students or HS kids. Will do outreach and community walks with walkaway actions

Ask Karen Strong to "polish" up her bid

Nan will be 3rd bid. Carol will ask her for a proposal

We may have an opportunity to fundraise through Gallatin Residents. Town Board committed \$15,000 - \$20,000 to NRI. We raised a lot of money for the town and can use some.

Tom Baluk sent an email about wanting to joining the CAC.

Upcoming Events:

Gallatin Conservation area: Trail cleanup April 20th at 9am, and follow-up on deer enclosure including more invasive removal.

Carol wants to do something on Dark Skies. Night sky compliant lights and a summer lightning bug walk.

Road clean-up in fall. Ask the Highway Dept when we should do it.

May 11th Town of Taghkanic joint event. Trail Cleanup (at Pond Lily entrance) and tree planting. Park superintendent (Chris) is getting confirmation for projects Ben presented. (including redirecting water off trails). Connect it to Mother's Day. Share with local newspapers. Rain or shine. The park will stage it all. Need to find out time.

Add Upcoming Events page to website. Stixxx suggested we put sign up for CAC email on a clip board in town hall.

Meeting notes Town of Gallatin CAC

April 8, 2024

Attendees: Eli, Carol, Nancy, Stixxx, Tara, Harry, Tom, Ben

Approve prior minutes

NRI

Jim Norgren meeting (with Eli, Carol and Eli) on Friday. Came away feeling he is a great fit and best pricing. Other consultants met with are very expensive and have no "on the ground" work, which Jim does. Jim sent a contract today.

Carol, Tara and Eli will review and present to John Riley. Jim will put together an online mapper tool.

Carol sid we should look through the NRI guidebook for scope

We could also apply for a grant (April 18th there's an Estuary webinar. Tara will send it around). Ancram's NRI is worth reading.

We will have a working meeting at 4:30 on the 17th, Carol will send out the proposal in a Google Doc for comments. We will ask John Riley to meet after that before the 23rd.

Request Lisa put the CAC website on the icon page.

Gallatin Trail cleanup on April 20th at 9am.

Tour of the deer enclosure. Eli will update the announcement. People can sign up through MailChimp. Lisa needs to send it out too (Eli will resend it with a link to email rsvp sign up).

Punch Brook Roe Jan presentation on Monday, April 15th 6:00-7:30 at Ancram Town Hall.

May 11th joint event at Lake Taghkanic with Town of Taghkanic trail work for the White Trail and native plant installation. Start of trail work 9:30 and planting at 10. Eli is sharing the flier. Betsy Albert of Taghkanic is spearheading the event.

Meeting notes Town of Gallatin CAC

May 13, 2024

Member Attendees: Eli Arnow, Nancy Kuster, Stixxx D'Armiento, Harry Franklin, Ben Maron,
Guest Attendee: Jessica Hallman

Prior minutes were approved.

Eli asked Nancy to send all prior months' minutes to Lisa DeLeeuw

Recap of the Earth Day Event: Gallatin Conservation Area.

Eli presented education about deer exclosures and we did some elimination of invasives. Eli filed a report on the deer exclosure grant and discovered we have \$492 to still spend. Eli will look into plants that would be preferable to buy and install inside the deer exclosure. Harry brought up a trail cleanup and boardwalk material options were discussed. It would also be nice to have signage. Eli suggested forming a trail committee and pull in some new and formerly interested people.

Ben reported on the first (May 11) Lake Taghkanic trail cleanup.

Ben said it was a good start and there is a lot more to do, including education and promotion. There were 4 groups of people with different tasks. Eli said it felt like a real community day. We will continue partnerships with other towns and CACs in the future. We should send out a report and make a date to do more work at the park in the fall with future goals. Ben said the new director of the park is very open to community activities. Ben suggested including a food budget for the next volunteer day. (Betsy from Taghkanic arranged and paid for all the food this time).

NRICP

The NRICP contract is almost ready to sign. We continued our discussion on what will be included in the NRICP and contract.

Eli said everyone on the CAC needs to come to the Town Board meeting Tuesday, May 21st to see Jim Nordgren's presentation and show our support. We need to encourage everyone we know to attend, including members of other town committees. Tara drafted a letter (we discussed how to get it out to the public). Also, Jim may want to arrive earlier that Tuesday to host a walk or discuss a field guide.

CAC website

Stixxx asked what should be on the resource page on the website.

The link to the CAC page still needs to be linked on the town website.

We need to add pics to the Good News page.

June 10, 2024 CAC Meeting Notes

Member Attendees: Eli Arnow, Carol Smillie, Nancy Kuster, Stixxx D'Armiento, Tara Silberberg

Guest: Eli Smith, Alysia Pascaris, Tom Baluk, Jessica Hallman

Other Jim Nordgren

Prior minutes were approved.

The town is hiring a lawyer to do the zoning review based upon the Town Board recommendations rather than a committee including the Planning and CAC Boards.

Elia and Carol reported that at the last board meeting Jim Nordgren was approved to do the NRICP.

NRCP action discussion

We will first focus on the contiguous forested area that runs through Gallatin.

Jim wants to reach out to land owners of larger properties regarding conservation.

We have done 2 walks already. Signal Hill hike this past weekend (found rare species, high biodiversity) incredible ecology.

Tara suggested a Gallatin Hike Day (bring a picnic) and hiking old roads day. We could do a town blast about allowing access to their land/road in order to learn about the natural resources there.

Jim suggested looking at the forest overlay as a start. The Signal Rock walks would be a great start (walking north and then south), and do a plot sampling walk. We will need to ask other land owners.

Tara said we would do a public hike on July 13th in the morning and then have a CAC table at the Town Picnic to engage with people.

We could create a running list of animals that people have seen and ask for photos as a way to inventory habitats.

Potential Walk dates: June 19th or 21st (private), July 1st or 2nd, and 13th, We discussed many options for properties to walk.

Town of Gallatin CAC Meeting notes July 2024 - present

July 8, 2024 Meeting notes Town of Gallatin CAC

Member Attendees: Eli Arnow, Carol Smillie, Nancy Kuster, Stixxx D'Armiento, Tara Silverberg, Tim McHenry, Harry Franklin, Ben Maron, and Sarah McGhee (Town Board member representative)

Guest: Alysia Pascaris, will be joining our committee.

Prior minutes were approved.

Natural Resource Inventory and Conservation Plan Updates

- Stixxx recapped walk with Jim (7/8/24) along the Roe Jan. Jim did sampling.
- NRICP table at Town Picnic Jim and Eli will host a table which will include forest health info and Maps.
- Hike (announced in an email) on Saturday at 9:30-11:30 before the picnic. It will be on Eli's property. RSVP's will go to Eli for details.
- Walks and photos should be posted on website and social media and also have signup sheets.

Climate Smart Committee (CSC) as a subcommittee or group within CAC was discussed and agreed. CSC will join the CAC meetings. NRICP is a Climate Smart Action as well as CAC task.

CSC activities

Current points from Clean Energy activities are worth \$82,500. We previously were awarded \$10,000. There is administrative work to collect data that demonstrates the criteria has been met and then there will be grant requests after approval notifications that it is earned.

Time commitment is onerous for a volunteer. Carol proposed a Sustainability Coordinator as a temporary paid position (maybe 30 – 40 hrs. a month) funded by the green fund. Note, the first two \$5,000 earned were designated to the green fund. Carol got a lot of push back that this should be volunteer work despite the time commitment. No one volunteered.

The town hasn't decided how they want to spend the upcoming money earned but must do so by deadlines in August and October. Carol provided links and chart to the Town Board listing approved uses, which must be energy related. It could be used for HVAC for a town building, greening the existing town building (renovations) solar and EV stations. The town has been approved for a free energy audit which is a pre-requisite before any building upgrades.

There are additional Clean Energy and a Climate Smart points and grant opportunities. Climate Smart should be involved in zoning to review potential regulations. We need to submit basic Climate Smart now that Clean Energy section is fulfilled (for now).

We need to submit CARP, the Comprehensive plan and the Punch Brook project.

Tim will approach the board again to propose getting a coordinator in order to go forward with more funding opportunities.

August 12, 2024 Meeting notes Town of Gallatin CAC

Member Attendees: Eli Arnow, Nancy Kuster, Stixxx D'Armiento, Harry Franklin, Ben Maron (zoom), Carol Smillie

Members

Eli revisited people interested in joining the CAC including Alysia Pascaris. Eli suggested we send an email to all who expressed interest at the town picnic. We need more volunteers (so does the Climate Smart Committee). Annabel needs to resign because she moved.

Eli updated the calendar invite for the meeting to recurring.

Last town board meeting review:

Climate Smart Committee

TB said no to hiring a sustainability coordinator.

Lisa Deleeuw offered to submit grants for the August 28th and October deadlines. Town must decide uses before the deadlines.

Carol submitted the community campaigns that qualify to get the approval for grants. (there were 2 electric vehicle levels, Clean heat for heat pumps level two and additional information about town energy use provided by Lisa. This equals first tier clean energy 2000 points worth \$10,000 for a total of \$32,500) Another \$50,000 will be triggered after these approvals.

Natural Resource Inventory and Conservation Plan (NRICP)

The board has committed \$20,000 for the NRI/NRCP

Eli and Jim walked Matt Stinchcomb's place last week and deer damage was rampant.

Discussion about overlay zones, the health of the forest, and forest ranking metrics

Carol suggested contacting Hudson River Estuary, DEC.

We need another public hike on the calendar. We discussed options including the Gallatin Conservation Area.

September 9, 2024 Meeting notes Town of Gallatin CAC

Member Attendees: Eli Arnow, Carol Smillie, Nancy Kuster, Stixxx D'Armiento, Tara Silberberg, Harry Franklin, Ben Maron

Guest: Alysia Pascaris, Jim Nordgren

Prior minutes were approved

NRICP update with Jim Nordgren.

Jim shared what has been surveyed so far, showing us a map with Core Forests (unfragmented). Jim said we need to draw the line of where the overlay will be, paying attention to the DEC ranking system and ground truthing.

Saturday walk/ survey had a great turnout at Eli's property with Planning Board members (Alysia's and Larry Brody's property will be next. Alysia will coordinate.). DEC has recommended ground-truthing. Jim is noticing is that a lot of roads that the DEC thought problems, are not really, however, there are a lot of invasives on logging roads. He found ridge top clear cuts which are ecologically bad and counter to ridge top our overlay zone (he showed 3 properties as examples of concern). Seems to be caused by subdivision problems.

Tree surveys should be required to note what is important to protect as well as wetlands before development.

Zoning review and discussion

Eli brought up how this all fits into the zoning review and the possibly meeting with John Riley. Noted that thus far the lawyer did not attend any meetings. Further discussion regarding zoning

Carol asked Christine Vanderlan of the Hudson Estuary Group to do a presentation regarding local environmental regulations and examples from neighboring towns. Town Board and Christine agreed.

Public outreach is needed for the NRICP Eli suggested an NRI/NRCP open house and get Jim to put it together.

EMC Update Carol reported that land is being donated as a community forest in Taghkanic. There will be upcoming meetings to define what this means and towns are welcome to attend.

Eli suggested we do another trail work day October 13th to coordinate with the native planting the Town of Taghkanic is planning. Ben will look into it.

Eli brought up new members and requested Alysia for the next new member. AGREED

We talked about merging the CAC and CSC. Agreed

Carol talked about the energy campaigns that have been achieved as well as ongoing Climate Smart. Task: we need to go through the comprehensive plan to see where it meets the Climate Smart criteria. Lisa Deleeuw is submitting the grant fund use proposals.

October 9, 2024 Meeting notes Town of Gallatin CAC

Member Attendees: Eli Arnow, Carol Smillie, Nancy Kuster, Stixxx D'Armiento, Tara Silverberg, Jessica Hallman

Guest: Alysia Pascaris, Jim Nordgren

Prior minutes were approved.

NRICP and Zoning

Discussion around tabling forest overlay zoning discussion with the town board until after Christine Vanderlan's presentation in November so she can present what other towns are doing and help inform Town Board discussion on this issue.

Update on CAC meeting with Christine Vanderlan: Need for flooding and erosion prevention including green infrastructure for stormwater, and clear cutting for development protections, ridgeline and steep slope protections and wetland and watercourse setbacks. Discussion around Biodiversity overlay vs Forest overlay. Agreed Biodiversity overlay was not a direction we want to go.

We will soon have a draft of the forest ground truthing work and proposed forest overlay zones. We will move on from forests to wetlands, streams and vernal pools.

Zoning will go before a public hearing after the lawyer draft's a proposal. Concerns about the process, that no professionals have been brought in yet, and that the lawyer does not attend meetings.

Carol brought up that CARP (climate adaptation resilience plan) should be further reviewed by the town and adopted for Climate Smart Credit and as recommended by the Comprehensive plan. No action was taken. Revisit later.

November 11, 2024 Meeting notes Town of Gallatin CAC

Member Attendees: Eli Arnow, Carol Smillie, Nancy Kuster, Harry Franklin, Tara Silberberg, Ben Maron

Guest: Erin McDermott, Jim Nordgren,

Prior minutes were approved.

NRICP and Zoning presentations

Christine's presentation is scheduled for the November town board meeting. Jim said he would have the forest overlay preparation for the December town board. We are asking Planning and Zoning to attend. Neighboring towns are interested in the presentation, members of Taghkanic will attend.

New Columbia Land Conservancy Project

Nancy will be representing Gallatin at the Columbia Land Conservancy meeting next week for their county conservation program. She will bring up forest conservation and our forest overlay with the NRICP, as well as attention to indigenous history (Signal Rock).

Thursday there is a meeting at Taghkanic Town Hall regarding the Master Plan for Lake Taghkanic to get public comments 6-7:30. (shared web links)

Update from Jim

Jim will go through the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. All wetlands are important (but not mapped). Education and outreach is needed. Wetlands need to be defined in zoning. Jim suggested sampling them. Ben suggested we look at culverts. Jim said many culverts need to be resized, they need to be in good shape for climate change and wild life crossings. We also should consider vernal pools.

Action: Have people share their photographs of wildlife that can be posted on the website, especially rare species. Erin will help with that.

Note: Jim included the migratory birds in the NRICP atlas.

Carol suggests we do a community outreach in February. Talk up citizen scientists!!!

December 9, 2024 Meeting notes Town of Gallatin CAC

Member Attendees: Eli Arnow, Nancy Kuster, Harry Franklin, Tara Silverberg, Ben Maron, Alysia Pascaris, Stixxx D'Armiento

Guest: Erin McDermott, Jim Nordgren,

Prior minutes were approved.

Recap of last Town Board meeting and discussion around Christine and Jim's presentations

Alycia asked if we are going to be proposing ordinances.

Christine's video and presentation did not get posted on the website yet. We could have it linked to our announcement for the meeting next week. We also need to attach forest document and share with the Planning Board.

Recommendations:

- Extending forest overlay over most of the town as drawn
- Limiting tree removal.
- Protecting water resources for flood and erosion concerns as well as water quality.
- Prevent clear cutting and tightening up temporary permit for timber harvesting (in wetlands for example and steep slope). For example, no clearing more than ¼ acre without a permit.
- 100 - 200 foot buffers on all wetlands.
- Increasing lot size (best thing 10-20 acres) recommended by US forestry.
- Affordable housing will be an issue we need to address. Reduce lot size and road set-backs in appropriate areas. Smart Growth for subdivisions
- Jim brought up the conservation subdivision requirement. We need to have a planning lawyer for consultation. It increases the acres zoned.

Alysia is concerned "filling in the details" after the fact (after the meeting). We are rushing the process of developing an inventory and recommendations. Tara thinks we can make a summary of bullet point recommendations up front, working off the Comprehensive Plan.

Eli will resend Jim's edited forest document and then send it to the board. It will be sent Wednesday morning to the town board and cc the Planning Board and ZBA board. Tara will reach out to the Comprehensive Plan committee to tell them we are following up on the Comp plan.

Jim brought up there is still a Right to Farm and a Right to Forest Harvest state plan, noting property owners still do have rights.