

## Town of Gallatin CAC Minutes 11/14/2022

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

Guests Present: Todd Mitty, Ritchie Hilton

### Update on NRI/Open Space Plan Technical Assistance application

- Application to the DEC being submitted in partnership with Town of Copake, as DEC administers this program as a way of connecting neighboring municipalities within a single watershed (Precedent: Rhinebeck)
- Resolution needs to be submitted to Gallatin town board at 11/15 mtg to meet 11/30 application deadline (Copake TB has passed resolution)
- Carol and Eli talked with Ingrid Haeckel at Hudson River Estuary program about the opportunity and it seems like a great fit. This technical assistance would get Gallatin (and Copake) a simple NRI immediately and Open Space plan would be a separate step.
- Partner municipalities must submit a single application; Eli and Carol to work on Gallatin's section.
- Eli, Ben, Nancy, Carol, and Stixxx to form committee to manage implementation of award if received
- Eli to reach out for a short bio from above committee members

### Climate Smart Communities

- 11/15 Town Board meeting will include assigning CSC committee members

### Comprehensive Plan

- Thursday, 11/17 to be date of comprehensive plan information session

### Additional Business

- Eli and Stixxx to continue finalizing CAC website
- CAC to put out an open call for new members in early 2023; Avalon interested in becoming full member. There is no minimum committee size, but there is a maximum.
- Interest remains in sending out new years' mailing/newsletter but CAC will need to build own mailing list (cannot request existing addresses from town)

October 11, 2022

Town of Gallatin CAC Minutes

Members present: Eli Arnow, Carol Smillie, Matt Stinchcomb, Harry Franklin, Nancy Kuster, Avalon Bunge (Secretary)

Approval of minutes from September 7, 2022

### **Update from September town board meeting**

- No CAC line item for 2023, but CAC funding to come out of the general budget

### **Climate Smart Communities**

- Haley from Capital District Regional Planning Council presented Climate Smart Communities (CSC) to Board, and her presentation was well received. All Board members were in favor of pursuing CSC.
- Gallatin is currently a NYSERDA Clean Energy Community (CEC) and CEC points will translate to CSC.
- CAC to get statistics on building usage, energy usage, greenhouse gas emissions from Lisa et al to plug into existing CEC criteria and make sure all possible points are received
- Matt is a member of Columbia County CSC working group and will support Carol on Gallatin CSC, including starting a CSC working group on HVCAN (Hudson Valley Climate Action Network)
- Additional new members for CSC Committee as confirmed by Carol: Tara Silberberg, Leah Cadwallader, Pat O'Dell, Tim McHenry, Nancy Kuster
- Next Steps: November Town Board meeting agenda item for Board to sign CSC resolution; also confirm with Board that Board has adopted Columbia County NRI and Gallatin habitat assessment; get in touch with Columbia Land Conservancy to get their maps created by The Nature Conservancy that may overlap with NRI and habitat assessment maps

### **NRI**

- Potential to complete NRI and Open Space Plan concomitantly. If CAC completes Open Space Plan, CAC will become a board instead of a committee, similar to e.g. Planning Board
- CAC is not eligible to receive DEC Hudson River Estuary Grant until Gallatin closes its open grant for comprehensive plan. Town's goal is to close the latter before end of 2022.
- Next Steps:
  - Eli to contact Hudsonia to begin conversation, receive a proposal and see where Gallatin NRI could fit on their 2023 schedule; also to confirm whether RFP/solicitation of multiple proposals is required
- Matt to research additional funding opportunities using Columbia Land Conservancy list of funding opps; HVCAN list; other sources as forwarded by CAC members
- Related: There is a currently open funding opportunity from NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program to provide technical assistance including mapping to teams of two adjacent towns; this

would not be a substitute for larger DEC grant but could be worth pursuing as a team with Copake with whom Gallatin shares the Roe Jan watershed

#### **Nancy's report from the Punch Brook-Roe Jan Watershed Characterization Meeting**

- Watershed planning: delineating/characterizing the watershed; identifying what needs to happen to the watershed after it's been characterized to make sure it's healthy and resilient; incorporate a floodplain management plan
- Nancy to summarize meeting and potential CAC involvement in a written paragraph, send to Carol to identify possible CSC points for participation in this advisory group

#### **Additional miscellaneous business**

- Soon it will be time to recruit new CAC members; Eli to confirm date of first convening of CAC, term lengths, term start dates for current members; the latter to be added to member listings on CAC website
- Website: Eli and Stixxx continue updating
- Partners for Climate Action Ecological Restoration Grant has been submitted
- Potential upcoming event planning: Winter plant ID walk at Gallatin Conservation area with food and drink; other future possibilities include kids' activities, leaf pressing, scavenger hunt, foraging walk, healthy vs. unhealthy forest comparison, education by various foresters or environmental groups
- Holiday newsletter mailing to include year-in-review summary covering CAC's activities and accomplishments during 2022

September 7, 2022

Town of Gallatin CAC Minutes

Members present: Eli Arnow, Avalon Bunge, Carol Smillie, Benjamin Maron, Stixxx D'armentio, Nancy Kuster

Guests present: Ritchie Hilton

Approval of minutes from August 1, 2022

### **Budget items for Town Board budget**

- CAC to request \$1500 in upcoming Board budget: \$1000 to cover a holiday/new years' mailer; ~\$150 in web expenses from website build; \$350 in supplies, education and outreach materials
- Mailer (physical) to be used to build interest in the CAC, grow mailing list, call for new applicants, and share findings from habitat summary as described below

### **Takeaways from Gallatin Habitat Summary presentation**

- Attended by 25 people, including members of CAC, planning board, Town Board, comp plan committee, other towns' CACs
- Interesting to learn that such a large proportion (85%) of Gallatin's area is forested, specifically high-quality forest that is part of a critical forest connectivity corridor; general perception prior to presentation was that there is more farmland/open area than the reality
- Potential to make most impactful maps from the habitat summary available for viewing as posters at Town Hall, with brief and clear interpretation/signage
- Maps and findings to share include forested area, forest quality, wetlands, stream connectivity

### **Climate Smart Communities and future of CAC**

- Note that several CAC members' terms are ending soon; potential in the future to stagger terms to minimize turnover at any given time
- Group should begin thinking about recruiting new CAC members as well as creating a separate committee or subcommittee to address Climate Smart Communities (CSC)
- CSC update since last meeting:
  - At August Town Board meeting, CAC proposed to the Town that they adopt CSC resolution to begin process
  - Eli and Carol met with Haley Balancoff from Capital District Regional Planning, who is employed by NYSDEC to help communities complete CSC
  - Note: NYSDEC supports CSC, while NYSERDA supports Clean Energy Communities (CEC). Gallatin is already a CEC with 1200 CEC points. Additional CEC points will open up more funding from NYSERDA, and many CEC actions/points also carry over to CSC points.
  - Haley to present on CSC strategy at September TB meeting
- Group approves Carol as interim CSC coordinator

### **Additional updates from August Town Board meeting**

- Board liaison/point of contact for the CAC was requested; will be an agenda item at TB January meeting

- Town hall: TB to convene building committee meeting with engineers to evaluate town's needs and costs of renovation vs. new building; create in-depth survey and site plan
- Eli presented draft resolution in support of NY CLCPA (Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act); resolution was not approved due to concerns about CLCPA impacts to town residents.

#### **Update on recycling plant tour**

- Carol and Harry visited County Waste recycling plant – large company with Albany-to-NYC catchment area that employs single stream recycling system (machine separation of cardboard, plastic, other waste types)
- Columbia county contracts with Casella Recycling for the county transfer station recycling. It is transported to the Casella Rutland VT facility.
- Potential for waste subcommittee to be formed as part of additional committee formation/restructuring of CAC around Climate Smart Communities
- Members note that Etsy in Hudson and O Zone in Red Hook are good points of contact for state-of-the-art waste handling and recycling as well as the Columbia County Zero Waste Committee.

#### **Web and social media updates**

- Stixxx has completed migration of website to new, free hosting service. New version of website needs additional surface-level updates but is close to launch. New web subcommittee meeting to be scheduled
- Nancy to serve point person for keeping event and news links up-to-date on website
- Nancy is already social media point person; reminder to group to send events, news and photos to Nancy to share on Instagram and Website.
- Next to post: Matt's photos from Habitat Summary gathering
- Carol to provide access to shared Google folder as an additional place to share CAC photos
- Website launch and presentation to TB tentatively planned for October TB meeting

#### **Ecological Restoration Grant**

- Members approve purpose of grant request: \$1500 for small-scale deer enclosure and habitat restoration within enclosure, to be installed at Gallatin Conservation Area
- Grant must be sent to Town Board for approval by 9/16, prior to September TB meeting
- Eli briefly shares grant draft and will send document to CAC members following meeting

August 1, 2022

Town of Gallatin CAC Minutes

**Members Present:** Eli Arnow (Chair), Gwen Greene, Matt Stinchcomb, Carol Smillie, Nancy Kuster, Stixxx D'Armentio, Harry Franklin (as of 7:30 PM), Avalon Bunge (Secretary)

**Guests Present:** Ritchie Hilton

Approval of Minutes from 6/13/22 (no July meeting)

**Discussion of most recent Town Board meeting:** Town Board discussed a building committee for Town Hall construction; formal invitation to the town for a committee has not gone out. Carol offered to volunteer as consultant for committee

### **Habitat Summary Gathering (Aug 18 6 PM)**

Save the Date flyer has been created by Stixxx and posted to Instagram by Nancy.

Next Steps:

- Draft more detailed invitation (Carol and Nancy), create two graphics with invitation (Stixxx), send to Lisa to send to town (Eli) and post to social media on 8/8 and 8/15 (Nancy). Content for invitation to include: *Gallatin CAC has invited NYS DEC to present a habitat summary of Gallatin, free to town residents, at Lake Taghkanic State Park, Thursday 8/18 at 6:00 PM, light refreshments and garden produce swap to follow.* Flyer to also include map graphic of location and/or parking instructions.
- Harry to make simple sign/arrow for directing traffic on event day
- Christine from DEC to bring screen, projector, extension cord; power and restrooms are onsite at Pavilion E
- Avalon and Eli to bring zucchini bread, chips and salsa, paper plates and cups, box wine
- Matt to bring XL blue water cooler with water
- Nancy and Matt to coordinate additional refreshments as needed
- All group members to do outreach to personal contacts/networks around event; Carol to invite comp plan committee and Eli to invite town board
- All group members to arrive between 5:30-5:45 for setup on event day

### **NRI**

- Habitat summary to be presented on 8/18 is a mini version of NRI
- Create timeline of NRI process, based on timeline available on DEC website (Carol)
- Review RFPs from other towns recently requested by Matt and Carol when available

### **Climate smart communities (DEC) / Clean Energy Communities (NYSERDA)**

- Most Columbia County towns are currently pursuing or already certified as Climate Smart Communities
- First step toward CSC is a resolution passed by the town
- Completing NRI generates CSC "points"; group agrees that CSC and NRI can potentially be pursued concurrently in 2023

- Per Matt, CSC requirement is a significant amount of work and the towns that are most successful have a) buy-in and support from all town departments (highway, solid waste, town clerk, buildings, etc) and b) a paid environmental director OR strong and focused volunteer leader to spearhead the process. Potential to apply to 2023 Local Champions cohort from Partners for Climate Action, which mentors local leaders to create CSCs
- Carol to download draft resolution from CSC website and create some marketing copy around why CSC is important and worth pursuing in Gallatin
- Matt to email John Riley to check on status CSC and learn whether the board has discussed it

### **Liaison**

Group identified importance of reinstating liaison from Town Board to be a point person on communications around CSC, NRI, event outreach and other projects. Gwen and Eli to be in touch with Board to request.

### **Brief discussion of recycling/waste**

- June meeting had included discussion of item-specific recycling stations. Reach out to Amelia at O Zone (Red Hook) to get more info
- Currently Columbia County is doing a compost pilot at the county transfer station, and there is a county-level Zero Waste Committee
- waste and conservation could be a good topic for a future newsletter and will likely play a role in CSC “points”

### **Ecological Restoration Grants**

- Funding available for direct ecological action in communities (as opposed to planning/visioning processes)
- Project around the landscaping of the new town hall would be perfect – grant deadline 9/30/22
- Idea: Request funds for small deer enclosure at Gallatin Conservation area, including educational signage
- **Eli** to put together draft proposal and circulate to CAC.

### **CLCPA resolution:**

Gallatin has been invited to sign a nonbinding resolution in support of the NY CLCPA as proposed to demonstrate support for it. Webinar describing CLCPA and resolution taking place on 8/3 – Eli and Avalon to attend; Eli to invite Town Board to attend

June 13, 2022

## Town of Gallatin CAC Minutes

### Members present

Nancy Kuster                      Harry Franklin                      Stixxx D'Armentio                      Carol Smillie  
Benjamin Maron (as of 6:45)                      Avalon Bunge (secretary)

### Guests present

Tara Silberberg (as of 6:30)

Approval of minutes from May meeting

Approval of motion to move meeting time to 7:00 PM until further notice

NB: June Town Board meeting is moved to 6/30

### Website discussion:

- Group is pleased with overall look and feel of website, especially native plant photos. Call for additional scenery/landscape photos from members.
- Query: How will the website be updated efficiently going forward? Best to send all content (upcoming events, news articles, photos\* for website) to a single point person – Eli is nominated but is not present; will confirm by next meeting. Website also needs additional “good news” and local history of positive environmental change.
- \*Photos for Instagram should be sent to Harry, not website point person. Instagram strategy to be set at next website subcommittee meeting
- Deadline set: All CAC members to review website thoroughly, clicking through each page, following every embedded link, copy editing as needed. Comments due to website subcommittee (Stixxx, Ben, Eli, Harry, Avalon) by EOD Friday June 24. Website subcommittee to meet and review week of June 27 (date TBD).
- Next newsletter to focus on promoting launch of the website and building mailing list

### Gallatin Habitat Summary

- Christine Vanderlan, formerly of CLC now of DEC, has volunteered to present habitat summary.
- Consensus is that it would be best to do it outdoors, as a “twilight event” on a weeknight (ideally a Thursday) in later August at Lake Taghkanic State Park.
- Action items: Carol to check feasibility with Lake Taghkanic, town board. Harry to look into making a reservation for the event space at Lake Taghkanic through online portal. Gwen to discuss event budget with board.
- Event vision: Community potluck/picnic, family friendly, anticipate ~20 people in addition to CAC
- Lake Taghkanic logistics: note - admission free to all after 4 PM and to all seniors (62+)

### Climate Smart Community and NRI

Discussion of potential for Gallatin to become Climate Smart Community; concern raised that pursuing CSC would preclude work on NRI as both are large projects. After discussion, group concludes that NRI can be completed first and lead into CSC (not mutually exclusive). NRI to be discussed at next meeting. In near future, CAC to reach out to Town Board to get approval to begin CSC process. (Note that ongoing



CSC certification process may lend weight to CAC advisory role re: green building principles in town hall redesign.)

**New business:**

- Watershed Characterization Plan: Carol to follow up by email
- Columbia County Climate Carnival: To promote on website and Instagram
- Composting webinar: To promote on website
- GIS maps currently hosted on Gallatin website: To cross-host on CAC website
- Environmental Restoration Grant RFP open from Partners for Climate Action Hudson Valley – to promote through CAC networks and consider potential application
- At next meeting form plan to discuss with town board the possibility of implementing specialized recycling stations at town hall, e.g. batteries
- Solidify plans for August event on Gallatin Habitat Summary

## CAC Meeting 5/9/2022

Attendees      Gwen Greene                      Absent Nancy Kuster, Eli Arnow, and Avalon Bunge  
                    Carol Smillie  
                    Harry Franklin  
                    Stixxx D'Armiento  
                    Matthew Stichcomb  
                    Benjamin Maron

Topics discussed

### **Minutes from last meeting were approved**

Post Mortem on road clean up and trail work done in April – There was good attendance. These events also served as community building.

### **Activities**

A number of Activities were discussed for events to engage the Community. Matthew will chair a subcommittee. Everyone is interested in participating. As an example, a pollinator event could be done this summer.

There was discussion about what area of the GCA is retired landfill verses usable Conservation Area. See GIS mapping and landfill email with County (all 4+ cleared acres are landfill). The email makes clear that the site is an actively monitored landfill and cannot be developed.

**Website**      Stixxx is working on a Gallatin CAC website. There is an email and Instagram account, Agreed and purchased the domain "Gallatin CAC.org "  
We will request reimbursement from the town.

**BUDGET**      Gwen will request an amount for an operating budget to be available to the CAC from the town Board. Costs such as web hosting, special events.

**NRI**      What is the process, why is it needed, who will fund it?

The process is to send RFPs to prospective professionals and conduct interviews. We will need the town to request grant money. DEC typically funds NRIs but the Comprehensive Plan Grant needs to be closed first. Carol discussed this with Larry Brody recently and he said that he will try to close out the Comprehensive plan as soon as the group is able, which may be in December of this year.

We will look at upcoming deadlines and try to create a timeline to move the process forward.

Matthew will request a copy of the RFP used by Ancram.

Note, grant deadline at the DEC is in June. (Announced in April 2022 and due by June 1). These are typically offered annually.

April 11, 2022

## Town of Gallatin CAC Minutes

### Members present

|             |                   |                          |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Gwen Greene | Nancy Kuster      | Harry Franklin           |
| Eli Arnow   | Stixxx D'Armiento | Avalon Bunge (secretary) |

### Guests present

|           |                 |                 |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Ben Maron | Molly Salisbury | Tara Silberberg |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|

Approval of Minutes from March 14, 2022

Gwen introduces the CAC's activities to the guests.

**Barriers to outreach and potential solutions:** Group discusses hurdles to sharing information/events with residents. cognizant of privacy concerns and data-sharing protocols. Tara suggests CAC-specific email address to add to any flyers/materials for distribution. Group believes such an email exists but is dormant. TBD

**Updates on website and newsletter approval:** Group discusses logistics of submitting draft mockup of website to town with plenty of time before next board meeting. Harry shares Columbia Land Conservancy's listing of local CACs (<https://clctrust.org/help/communities/cac/>).

Newsletter: Since draft newsletter approval was granted at prior board meeting, Eli to submit final version to Lisa for distribution.

### Earth Day Cleanup Event – Trail Day 4/23 (Saturday)

- Eli, Avalon and Gigi Giacomara walked the Conservation Area trail recently noting it is not clearly marked. Eli will set up a walk with Michael Moran to visit site and confirm trail layout.
- Participants to bring their own loppers, clippers, handsaws, etc. Due to safety concerns, chainsaw work will be conducted by Eli, Ben Maron and Stixxx the Friday prior to the trail event (4/22). Any fallen trees or cut saplings can be moved to line the trail edges.
- Stixxx can source extra trail markers from a nearby trail, which will be spray-painted a solid bright color to serve as blazes. Eli to source galvanized nails to attach markers/blazes to trees without compromising tree health.
- Elliot Spitzer has said he will come to the trail cleanup event on Saturday 4/23
- Avalon offers snacks for trail cleanup. Group likes the idea of framing event as a potluck.

### Earth Day Cleanup Event – Street Cleanup 4/24 (Sunday)

- Tara notes that some streets span Gallatin and other towns like Pine Plains; recommends sharing event with neighbors even if they're not technically Gallatin residents; group agrees
- Central pickup of supplies to take place at town hall in the morning. Items for pickup: trash bags, globes, trash pickup sticks, high-vis vests. Harry to confirm with Lisa that vests and pickup sticks are still at Town Hall from last year's event. Harry also to purchase disposables (gloves, bags) and be reimbursed by Gallatin Residents' Assoc. Still TBD if pickup will be staffed by CAC

members or if items will be placed in an easy-access outdoor container without staff. Molly to assist Harry with logistics.

- For both events, group discusses importance of taking photos for promotion on social media and on website

**Brief discussion of next possible events after Earth Day**

March 14, 2022  
Town of Gallatin CAC Minutes

**Members present**

|                                    |                |                          |
|------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Nancy Kuster                       | Harry Franklin | Matt Stinchcomb          |
| Eli Arnow                          | Carol Smillie  | Avalon Bunge (secretary) |
| Stixxx D'Armiento (as of ~7:00 PM) |                |                          |

**Guests present**

|                |             |            |
|----------------|-------------|------------|
| Ben Maron      | Tim McHenry | David Hess |
| Gigi Giacomara |             |            |

Approval of Minutes from February 14, 2021

**Gallatin Conservation Area - April trail clearing and celebration - next steps**

Group discusses Earth Day trail clearing event for April 22 and/or 23 and agrees to go forward

Action items needed before the event:

- Visit trail area with Michael Moran and John Fraser Patterson, re-blaze the trail route as necessary; make a tool list for CAC members and volunteers to bring
- Group discusses potential work to be done: cutting and moving of downed branches and saplings in the path, raking, and clearing. Bringing wood chips in is not advised due to disease and invasive concerns, and not actually needed.
- Create event page for RSVPs and begin outreach to enlist volunteers.
- Matt to create event page using EventBrite or similar (with no external advertising). Matt will also share signup link with Lisa to post with Gallatin mailing list. Signups (with opt-in) can be used to begin compiling CAC mailing list.

Event logistics:

- Event date: Saturday, 4/23 (to be combined with Gallatin Street Cleanup – see below)

**Gallatin Road Cleanup - yes/no; if yes, when; next steps**

- Harry: From prior years' events, we have: artwork, directions, and app for people to sign up for a street to clean and a time slot; orange safety vests and homemade trash-picking sticks. To make event happen this year we need: to re-order supplies (bags and potentially gloves) for pickup at the town hall; make ourselves available to address any questions; communicate with the highway department to ensure pickup of trash bags afterward; send out invitation/notification through the town email list and additional networks.
- Tim McHenry: Observations on the cleanup last year: Allocating streets was great but allocating times was not necessary, since people mostly did it in their own time. Event was successful with good energy. Gallatin Residents Assoc. may still have some funds for needed supplies, and can conduct outreach through their mailing list. Notes that event timing in early April is good, since it's before the grass starts growing and before the worst tick season.
- Group discusses potentially merging street cleanup with trail cleanup event, and possibility of listing GCA trail as just another "street" to sign up for to clean up. Consensus: Schedule both events for same weekend, but have trail cleanup on Saturday only and street cleanup on Sunday only. Rain dates the following Saturday and Sunday.

- Refreshments/celebration: Group discusses importance of managing expectations for attendance at a post-cleanup party or offsite event; Matt proposes more of a pre-cleanup “celebration” with coffee and donuts during supply pick-up at the town hall and group agrees.
- Matt will add street cleanup signups to EventBrite event (or use signup platform used by CAC last year – will communicate with Harry), and advance as needed before CAC’s next meeting

**Community Education and Engagement Projects - what to choose. See ideas discussed in 2/14. Or suggest something new.**

- Group decides to postpone this discussion until next meeting

**Town Hall project update (Board agenda tomorrow: Town Hall next steps - Engage engineer/plan discussion/modular discussion)**

- David Hess: architect with 30 years’ experience designing large scale sustainable buildings.
  - David introduces his connection to the Town Hall project: In summer 2021, conducted “feasibility study” for the current town hall site, on a volunteer basis, with John Riley as main point of contact.
  - Study explored questions like: Is it possible to build a new building here, can you get enough parking, does the site have benefits that make it worth developing?
  - Study pointed out potential design flaws with current building – visitors arrive at the back door, building lacks presence and cohesion, etc. Study did not constitute a vision or a formal design.
  - David sees two options for the site: keep the building as is and renovate, or build a new building with orientation that takes advantage of passive solar, potential future rooftop solar, and other “green” building principles; is personally in favor of latter option, especially passive (net zero energy) status.
- Harry: At the last town board meeting, discussion indicated that this building is the major project for this year, that there are still finance points to figure out, and that next steps may include engaging an engineer and discussing design and construction options such as modular building. CAC’s key interest is that however construction proceeds, it should adhere to green principles as much as possible.
- Carol: At last CAC meeting we agreed we’d put together a statement stating that the CAC would like to be involved in advocating for green practices during construction, and to offer our group members’ expertise to advise on sustainable principles and strategies.
- David: Sustainability as a concept has a lot to do with programming and use. If you’re going to invest money and time and materials into a building that sits empty except for 6-12 hours a week, that’s not so sustainable. Important to think through how the building could be used beyond a few offices; and making sure it’s used is part of making it a sustainable building
- Eli: Brings up concern over whether advising on green building falls under CAC mandate, which focuses on natural resource conservation in Gallatin – any advice we offer needs to focus on cost-effective measures to conserve energy.
  - the CAC has a place in thinking about how to protect the site’s ecology and landscape; the CAC has an opportunity to shift the conversation around the new Town Hall from detail-oriented (new roof, new boiler, etc) to larger vision (integrating the site into the landscape, using it to anchor sense of place, social cohesion, community gatherings)

- Carol advises that the Comp Plan survey will be distributed soon, including questions for residents gauging their priorities for town hall programming and including an opportunity to write in feedback
- Tim McHenry: Shares that he recently (2/12) received a note from John Riley that copied Gwen Greene, describing some finances related to the new Town Hall: town currently has \$500k in savings and \$250k from Didi Barret, which will not be sufficient, so the town is looking into fundraising and bonding. The town cannot fundraise because they cannot give tax writeoffs, so reached out to the GRA to see if they would be interested in being the primary fundraiser for the community portion of the town hall.
- Follow-up: Matt and Carol to discuss potential advisory/assistance role of CAC in town hall project and reach out to John Riley for informal conversation prior to next CAC meeting

**Website - See Stixxx's emailed draft. Also see <https://www.sustainablegermantown.org/> and @sustainablegermantown (instagram)**

Harry invites group to brainstorm key points to share with board that will demonstrate the utility and importance of separate CAC website.

Matt proposes identifying and purchasing a URL that can be used to host signups for upcoming events and eventually grow into a fully developed website

- Group agrees to get website approval on agenda for next town board meeting. Harry notes that Board will be requiring minimum 5 days' notice for agenda items going forward.
  - Matt will put together a list of similar sites in nearby towns
- Stixxx asks for feedback on website draft and additional pages to add

**Newsletter**

Eli: Presented newsletter at last Board meeting, received generally positive feedback but board members didn't have time to review thoroughly before meeting. Eli to confirm approval by reaching out to board or reviewing last board meeting minutes.

Adjourn

February 14, 2022  
Town of Gallatin CAC Minutes

### **Members present**

|                                   |              |                                 |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Gwen Greene                       | Nancy Kuster | Harry Franklin                  |
| Eli Arnow                         | Carol Smilie | Avalon Bunge (secretary)        |
| Stixxx D'Armiento (as of 6:30 PM) |              | Matt Stinchcomb (as of 6:20 PM) |

### **Guests present**

Ben Maron                      Deb [Last name?]

- Approval of Minutes from January 10, 2021
- Brief discussion of next steps on two pending action items for Town Board approval (conservation area and newsletter): Gwen to circulate Eli's newsletter draft to Board; Matt and Eli to present conservation area and newsletter respectively at 2/15/22 Town Board meeting

### **Spring Street Cleanup**

- Harry brings up the Gallatin Residents Association (GRA)'s successful street cleaning event, which has previously taken place on Earth Day, has been successful and has an existing event template
- Event is a spring cleanup sponsored by the town; residents choose streets and form teams; GRA supplied garbage bags, trash pickers, and promoted and took photos of the event. Residents usually clean up the streets near their homes.
- Jung Min had maintained Instagram page for this event in the past (the main promotion) – Stixxx to promote this year's event through Instagram and ask Lisa to promote it through town website
- CAC to coordinate with highway department for trash bags and other supplies.
- Dates for this year's event - April 2-3 or 9-10 – to be finalized at next meeting

### **New Member Recruitment**

- Gwen: Lisa put out a newsletter soliciting for new CAC members; no applications received. Currently CAC has sufficient members, as current members meet new potential members with relevant expertise they can be added on a case-by-case basis.
- Harry agrees that current members should be actively thinking about new members, inviting guests to CAC meetings and/or engaging potential new members outside of meetings
- Deb: doesn't want to be on another committee is interested in CAC activities, and in being an active volunteer completing tasks and assignments.
- Proposed adding a volunteer roster to be maintained by CAC. Gwen notes that we will begin to build out this roster when we start sending out newsletters and start more engagement/outreach.

### **Town Hall**

- There are concerns that the new town hall should bring in aspects of green building, which doesn't seem to be a current priority for the town.



- Harry updates the group on the project's status: Per the Board, the town hall is the main project for 2022. Town has between \$800-900k plus access to loan funding, totaling over \$1mm. Private funds may be an additional source but have not been explored. The town is not permitted to solicit private funds/donations; the dormant GRA could be reconstituted to spearhead a fundraising project, but this has not been seriously considered to date
- Carol: There is definitely a contingent that wants the building to be green and to comply with climate smart/clean energy communities standards, but a recent email to the comp plan committee seemed to say the project won't involve a new town hall; only repairs. There seems to be some confusion about project scope.
- Harry: The next step for the town is to get a group together to create a vision and work with an architect but nothing has been done to this effect. David Hess (architect) emphasized that it would be a big mistake not to build green, and noted people often imagine that building green doubles project cost when in fact it doesn't, plus the savings start accruing immediately. The Town hall project is currently off to a slow start; nothing has been well defined and the CAC can get into the conversation on the ground floor.
- Gwen: We should emphasize that we are the committee best suited to engage in these discussions.
- Carol: We could put forward a statement that CAC would like to be involved with architectural planning in our capacity as environmental stewards and we want to have an active role in the town hall renovation planning process.
- Matt: CAC could volunteer to price out the greener options for the eventual building plan, making sure to present the CAC as allies, not adversaries
- Eli offers to contribute his knowledge to this discussion, having built a passive house in 2020 and done major research on all aspects of green building. Group is in favor, and Harry suggests Eli discuss further with David Hess.

#### **Website:**

- Harry believes that the CAC is not prepared to propose a website to the town; the website needs more preparation and strategy so the town does not feel the CAC is impinging on their control of information. Group decides not to raise question of website at February Board meeting
- Matt proposes using Eventbrite or similar third party platform as an interim step to gather emails and signups for the cleanup day. This will ensure that we have a user-friendly interface for our first event and show the town that we are capable of planning events and managing a group, before we take the step of asking for our own website.

**Ben Maron introduces himself:** has lived in Gallatin for ~20 years, actively enjoys the outdoors and environment, would like to participate in making the natural world more accessible. Has a stonework business, builds traditional drystone walls and is certified as an instructor.

#### **Additional ideas for community engagement**

- Gwen calls for ideas: What is our role in educating the community and bringing the community together? A brainstorming session followed, to be discussed further at future meetings

January 10, 2022  
Town of Gallatin CAC Minutes

**Members present**

|                  |                          |                |
|------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Gwen Greene      | Matt Stinchcomb          | Nancy Kuster   |
| Eli Arnow        | Carol Smilie             | Harry Franklin |
| Stixx D'Armiento | Avalon Bunge (secretary) |                |

**Guests present**

|              |                |              |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| Aviva Tilson | Lucy Trabulus  | Jung Min Lee |
| Todd         | Gigi Giacomara | Jacob Rieper |

- Approval of Minutes from December 13, 2021
- Moment of Silence for the recent passing of Planning Board Member Bruce Humphries
- Gwen notes that Fraser has stepped down from the Town Board and after conferring with John Riley re: next Board Liaison to the CAC, Gwen and John have agreed that no liaison is necessary and Fraser will not be replaced.

**Guests introduce themselves**

- Aviva: an herbalist who moved to Elizaville last year with her partner; both have a strong interest in conservation
- Lucy: A Gallatin resident for over 40 years, with no major conservation experience but interest in the community
- Gigi: A Gallatin resident who was previously a bird keeper at the Bronx zoo for 22 years and has strong background in wildlife/habitat conservation
- Jacob: Declines to introduce himself
- Jung Min and Todd: Currently in NYC; own property adjoining the Conservation Area; Jung Min is a former member of the CAC

**Recap of Conservation Area project status and discussion of community concerns**

- Gwen notes that the December board meeting was canceled, so agenda items to present to the board are still outstanding, in particular the plans for the Gallatin Conservation Area.
- Matt summarizes his proposal for the conservation area for the benefit of the guests: The basic idea is to clear a natural trail, without paving or new construction, being mindful of sensitive ecological areas along the Roe Jan Kill; so that the land is more accessible to the community. The trail will follow a route that is partially cleared along the old rail bed, and then continue along the route flagged by Fraser Paterson and Michael Moran.
- CAC will organize a community cleanup day on Earth Day Weekend (April 23-24, 2022) followed by a small community celebration on the evening of Sunday 4/24. Current focus is communicating the plan to the town, getting volunteers signed up for the work day, and soliciting donations/small fundraising for tools, refreshments, etc.
- Group is also considering a Phase 2 in summer 2022, to include future improvements such as wooden benches to be funded through naming opportunities, and educational signage focused on biodiversity/ecology/conservation, and potentially waste, since the site is a retired landfill.

- Todd and Jung Min ask clarifying questions about the trail route and bring up the importance of having unobtrusive but clear barriers to indicate where the trail ends, to prevent people using the trail from crossing onto private property. Group agrees on the importance of this and reiterates that the proposed route is reasonably distant from property boundaries.
- Jung Min notes that it's important not to see this area as the only community gathering space in Gallatin; residents also have Lake Taghkanic, with much more infrastructure, which would be a good spot for CAC to host any major events. Group agrees that no infrastructure is proposed for the conservation area, and the focus will be on environmental considerations and quiet use.
- Jacob introduces himself and immediately brings up major concerns regarding the intrinsic value of the CAC project. He states that he is a biker and hiker who has lived in Gallatin for 30 years, and that he sees no value in a trail project of this size. He wishes to be on record with the following: "There is no way that whatever you do here is going to attract people. It's too small, there's nothing to look at, and no one cares about signs highlighting plants. Where are you coming up with the idea that anyone wants to see this? If you're taking meeting minutes, put me down as 'this is a waste of time.'"
- Group responds:
  - Gwen states that the CAC serves at the pleasure of the Town Board, who tasked the committee with making a plan for community use of this land.
  - Matt and Stixxx further clarify that the Conservation Area is on land that the town owns, and that there has so far been no monetary investment made in the project.
  - Group invites Jacob to take his concerns before the Town Board, who have final say on the use of the site.

### **Discussion of NRI status**

- Carol has confirmed that CAC cannot receive DEC grant funding for the NRI while the town is simultaneously receiving DEC funding for the comprehensive plan; but CAC can seek a small grant to cover the cost of the RFP that's previously been sent out, and it's important to start getting on the calendars of the organizations who might be conducting the NRI.
- Carol states that our goal should be to do the NRI concurrently with an Open Space Plan (OSP). If the CAC completes an OSP, it may become a formal committee and have more input as an advisory council to the town board. It would be more like a separate board entity, comparable to the Planning or Zoning board.
- Carol anticipates NRI costs will be approximately \$50,000.
- Matt wonders if Columbia Land Conservancy or Open Space Institute might have funding and brings up the idea of talking to towns who have completed NRIs to see how they found funding, as well as talking to the three organizations that conduct the NRIs to see who their main funders are. Matt also notes it may be better to seek DEC funding for 2023.
- Carol recalls that the county-wide NRI has been completed and was once presented to the Town Board, then dropped; notes that CAC should follow up and ask Board to adopt county NRI.
- Carol also brings up the possibility of conducting a mini-NRI in the Conservation Area
- Eli asks how funding will be received for the mini-NRI or the main NRI. Gwen states that the town once mentioned a match for the mini-NRI: if the CAC raises \$4,000, the town will match with \$4,000, for a total of \$8,000. Gwen to follow up with Lisa to clarify the status of the town's

ability to seek and accept small grants, and the town's willingness to match funds raised a mini-NRI. Note that Gwen has recently been appointed Clerk of the Court.

- Todd notes the importance of seeking donations from community members even on a small scale to generate interest and grow the CAC's network of interested supporters
- Matt questions the wisdom of doing a mini-NRI if the CAC's mandate is conducting a town-wide NRI. If we start with the mini one, will it get re-done when the town-wide one is done?
- Harry notes that it sounds like the CAC will not have funding for the town-wide NRI till 2023, so the mini-NRI can and should be completed first to show our ability to accomplish real projects
- Eli mentions that the mini-NRI may provide learning opportunities for the town-wide NRI
- Gwen agrees with Harry on the importance of the CAC doing real projects with real-world impact in the short term; Gwen and Matt agree on the additional potential for action that would come from forming an independent 501(c)(3)
- Jung Min asks if CAC could catalog natural resources at Conservation Area using iNaturalist or similar, or work with local land conservancies who provide assistance without cost – a sort of DIY mini-NRI. Also notes the potential to lean on the knowledge of CAC members.

#### **Brief discussion of website and newsletter**

- Group agrees that with a separate CAC webpage, CAC would have more agency and potential for exposure; and that webpage needs to happen before social media engagement.
- Matt shares his screen and demonstrates Rhinebeck's climate smart website, which is linked from but independent from the town board site. Stixxx adds that Hudson has its CAC page integrated into the town site, while New Paltz has a standalone site. Nancy brings up Ancram CAC website as a potential model.
- Matt to ask Town Board if CAC can have a separate site linked to the town site. Group agrees that creating a mockup should follow getting permission from the Board.
- Brief mention of Eli's draft CAC newsletter. Harry approves of the draft and motions to approve it for presentation to the board. Gwen seconds, but motion is not formally carried, as meeting is breaking up.

#### **Action items to be completed before next meeting**

- Nancy to create and share a document about how other towns funded their NRIs
- Matt to present Conservation Area plan to Town Board
- Matt to ask Town Board if CAC can have a separate website linked to the town site
- Gwen to contact Lisa to clarify the status of the town's ability to seek and accept small grants, and the town's willingness to match funds raised a mini-NRI
- All CAC members should read Eli's draft newsletter for discussion at February meeting