

November 15, 2021  
CAC Minutes

Members present

Gwen Greene  
Carol Smilie  
Stixxx D'Armiento

Matt Stinchcomb  
Eli Arnow  
Councilman Fraser Paterson

Nancy Kuster  
Avalon Bunge

Approval of Minutes from September 13, 2021

Approval of motion to approve Avalon Bunge (wife of Eli Arnow) as secretary

Approval of motion to move recurring CAC meeting to the second Monday of each month

Gwen proposes that Eli and Matt will be the "face" of the CAC in conversation with the Town Board going forward. All are agreed.

Agenda items discussed:

**GCA Trail (henceforth "the trail")**

- Matt states that his initial proposal for the trail route has been approved by the Town Board. Route will follow the trail that Michael and Fraser originally created: a loop that runs down from the parking lot, continues along the rail bed, circles the old waste site and loops back to the parking lot. This route won't disturb the most ecologically sensitive areas of the site and will be a great opportunity to engage the local community in establishing the trails, especially as the trail work to be done is relatively light labor.
- Matt thinks we should set a date for a couple community work days early in the new year. Group agrees to prioritize these work days, but notes that we may have to work around weather and snowpack, and that we should identify ways to conduct robust outreach before scheduling. Potential to schedule these work days between January-March. Carol notes that there is existing community interest in more involvement with this type of project.
- Matt proposes that before community work days, CAC members should revisit site to flag and map the exact location of the proposed trail, identify trail width and note any obstacles to be removed. Fraser notes that a general map already exists, although possibly not as granular as would be needed to conduct the work; and that the southern border has been staked and flagged. Group agrees to check for existing stakes and flags when re-visiting site. Date to revisit site not set.
- Gwen asks: What obstacles might we come across? If we are going to cut small trees or saplings will we need approval? Fraser notes that all large trees that had fallen on the rail bed have already been cut into short lengths and most can be moved out of the way by hand, with the exception of a red oak log in two ~12'x3' sections that can't be moved by hand.
- Group discusses turning the above red oak log into benches, potentially soliciting design proposals from local woodworkers and/or community financial contributions (naming opportunities). Eli offers his chainsaw milling services and notes that red oak is not an ideal wood for outdoor use but could be sealed/stained/painted.

- Formation of Trail Subcommittee to include Matt, Gwen, Nancy, Carol, Stixxx and Eli. Matt to create shared Google doc and first draft of more detailed trail proposal for presentation to Town Board, to include community outreach plan. Matt to circulate doc to subcommittee for comments/contributions prior to next CAC meeting 12/13.
- Gwen to get on Town Board agenda after Board's 11/16 meeting. New proposal to be presented to full CAC at 12/13 meeting and proposed to Board by Matt/Eli on 12/14.

### **Town-Wide and GCA-Specific NRIs**

- Group notes that current status of RFP for NRI at Gallatin Conservation Area is stalled. Fraser states that Board has money in town recreation fund to offset some of the costs of the RFP, but Board expects the CAC to offset ~50% of the costs through additional fundraising.
- Gwen states that Harry (not present) knows the specifics of what needs to be done to complete RFP, so we should discuss further with Harry.
- Matt notes that the three quotes we received for the NRI for GCA only were each around \$8k. But a town wide NRI also needs to be undertaken, which will cost more like \$30k. The DEC is the main source of funding for town-wide NRIs (~\$1.5m of state money has been committed to NRIs in NYS recently); but the DEC usually only funds one major project per town at a time, and they've currently committed funding for the comp plan.
- Notes on timing of NRIs/comp plan: Town-wide NRI would include the GCA, but if GCA NRI was done first, it would be included in town-wide NRI later – wouldn't have to be redone. Typically the function of the town-wide NRI is to inform the comp plan, but the comp plan is in progress now and the CAC agrees that we do not have capacity to undertake town-wide NRI yet. However, Carol notes that comp plan committee is currently requesting add'l funds for mapping for comp plan, and this mapping might be able to be included in eventual town-wide NRI.
- Stixxx emphasizes that conducting the town-wide NRI is a task assigned specifically to the town CAC and is part of the CAC's mandate, so it's important not to lose sight of the NRI while working on other projects like the trail.
- Carol notes that CAC should create a preliminary list of natural resources in Gallatin so people know what they're contributing to if they contribute funds to the town-wide NRI, e.g. areas of undisturbed forest, wildlife corridors, breeding ground for endangered spp., special habitats
- Eli asks what the function of the NRI will be if it's completed after the comp plan is finalized. Matt notes that the timing on the comp plan is about 18 months, and the NRI would take at least that long, so theoretically they could be done in parallel and then integrated.
- Matt proposes creating an NRI subcommittee to map out the steps to get us to the NRI, then issue the RFP for the town wide NRI. This committee should not include Matt or Eli, but should include folks with knowledge of the history of the NRI in this town. This subcommittee to be discussed further at December meeting.
- Carol notes that Hudsonia is a logical choice for Gallatin's NRI since Gallatin has mostly environmental/forested space (as opposed to urban, riparian, etc).

### **Climate Smart Communities/Clean Energy Communities**

- Matt led Climate Smart Communities committee in Rhinebeck and tells us that Climate Smart Communities (CSC) (DEC program) is a large commitment (can't even register with the DEC until you pass a resolution as a town). For CSC, the town would have to designate a completely

separate committee from the CAC, with different leadership. Matt believes CSC is worth doing, provides a path for a town to focus on adaptation/mitigation, but would be a lot of work.

- Clean Energy Communities (CEC) (NYSERDA program) is a lower-hanging fruit. Actions taken through CEC can later be used to gain points in CSC.
- Town is about to start renovation work on the town hall, and we could incorporate climate smart aspects into that work through CEC, which supports projects like replacing old heaters with heat pumps, installing community solar, etc. CEC might be able to help pay for solar as part of town hall renovation, and this solar could then be used to get points under CSC in the future.
- Group agrees that we should organize priorities for CEC during December meeting

### **CAC Website and Digital Outreach**

- Gwen notes that CAC outreach has not been strong so far.
- Matt proposes building CAC website using Squarespace or similar tool, to be independent from Town website, but linked from Town website, similar to the CAC website for Rhinebeck.
- Stixxx notes that separate CAC website has been proposed before but got bogged down in technical details, but building a website is still possible and a good idea.
- Carol notes that a separate website is an important tool for the CAC to fulfill the part of its mandate related to education and outreach.
- Fraser believes that the town Board will likely be receptive but cautions that Board may want some level of control over info published on CAC website.
- Avalon brings up the role of social media in outreach. Currently Jung Min has access to social media profiles, but she no longer serves on CAC. CAC should start to re-engage with social audiences. Group agrees that Board is less likely to want full control over social media outreach.
- Matt offers to discuss building a CAC Website with Board.

### **Brief discussion on future fundraising:**

- Eli brings up CAC fundraising & private philanthropy. Question to address: Can individuals make tax deductible donations to the town/how can individuals contribute to CAC projects?
- Matt notes that we should first identify for what purpose are we trying to raise money/the role of private philanthropy specifically.
- Group agrees that realistically, we're not going to raise a lot of money from the general population, we should identify a list of people for target asks; and there are some private foundations that might be sources.
- An additional question raised: where does money raised by the CAC go - an independent 501c3 or the town or another entity?

### **Next CAC meeting 12/13.**

#### **Agenda items:**

- Dry run of Trail Committee's proposal to Board encompassing trail work & community outreach
- Discuss formation of NRI subcommittee of CAC
- Organize priorities for Clean Energy Communities
- Further discuss building CAC website and plan how to raise subject with Board