

TOW Conservation Commission

Meeting Notes

Meeting of 03/13/06

Begin

7:35 pm

Attending

- Salvatore LaBruna
- Claude Braithwaite – Not attending
- Patricia Owen
- Jon Paul Heurich
- Kevin Sumner
- Mike Leary
- Kate Fox

Review of Previous Meeting Notes

- Minutes were handed out and read individually. Nominated for approval by Pat. Seconded by Kevin.

Official Business

Discussed Orange County proposed “Mini-Loop” water line

- Being proposed by the county as a way to more equitably distribute county wide water resources.
- All “central” county towns would share water via a common supply line.
- Most OC towns are for the concept, but Wallkill is against it.
- It is probably more efficient / better in the long run, but getting it started and getting all town’s to agree to a common proposal could be problematic.

TSS Limits

- Mr. Smith responded to our report via a letter to the town board.
 - The letter individually explains the cause of each of the waste treatment plant violations mentioned in our report.
 - According to Mr. Smith’s reply, none of the violations are attributable to and/or would be more likely to recur due to the proposed TSS influent increase.
- The town votes to keep the TSS limit at 300 mg/l.
 - 4 of 4 attending board members vote to retain the 300 limit.

NRI

- Reviewed Karen Strong presentation from last week.
- Montgomery should have received the paperwork for our joint proposal already.
 - Sal will schedule a dual meeting with Montgomery CAC to discuss.

- Why was our proposal in conjunction with Montgomery rather than by ourselves?
 - Intermunicipal proposals are more likely to be approved by the DEC.
- Do we use Montgomery's consultant?
 - It may be a more efficient use of the funds to share a consultant.
 - However, we haven't guaranteed that we will work with their consultant.
 - Their consultant is strong on bio-diversity, but maybe too strong.
 - We have a much wider range of interest that we would like to pursue with the funding.
 - We will discuss this issue more after the joint meeting.
- What can we collaborate on?
 - Geo-coding would be a good way to share a consultant as it is something that we will need assistance on anyway.
- We requested \$30k, but only received \$20k. Where do we cut back to make up for the lesser funds?
 - We can obtain some maps / information from the County to limit the amount we need to generate ourselves.
 - To be useful we need them in electronic form instead of hardcopy.
 - Kevin will contact them and ensure we can obtain electronic versions.
- Many of the maps may not be up to date (Ag district in particular). We will need to update them. How to best update the maps?
 - We could manually update them by dividing the maps into sections and individually driving around and observing what natural resources are actually there.
 - A more efficient method may be to hold public meetings / outreach to get as much information as possible, then fill in the rest ourselves.
- How do we inform the public?
 - Direct mailing and advertisements in the paper would be best to inform the public.
 - We can also post on the town's website, but problems with it not being updated frequently probably means that many people don't consult it often.
- How do we organize the inventory?
 - The two options appear to be to divide by districts / areas and to divide by aspect of the inventory (Ag, wetlands, biodiversity, etc.).
 - Each of us will head up a committee who takes one area or aspect of the inventory.
- One meeting at town hall or separate ones for each district?
 - Probably best to start with a common meeting at the town hall to determine level of interest from the public.
 - Districts / areas that have good participation at the common meeting we can go ahead and get started with.
 - For areas that don't have good participation at the common meeting we may need to have a separate, better publicized meeting in those districts to obtain better participation.
 - It is probably best to do before school lets out.
 - Easier to get people to attend the meetings before vacation season.
 - If we can get volunteers assigned before summer then it is easier for people to get outside to perform the inventory while the weather is nice.
- We will need maps and lists of what we are going to inventory (Ag, wetlands, biodiversity, etc.) for the meetings.

- Types of maps?
 - Parcels and roads are a must.
 - Aerial would be nice also.
 - The water authority has aerial maps, but they are not officially available yet (and water authority is being disbanded).
- How do we get the information overlain onto the maps?
 - GIS is the obvious answer, but we need someone trained to use the software.
 - Kate's husband has some GIS experience and would be willing to help.
 - Not help with coding as it is difficult and time consuming, but willing to offering advice and interpretations.
 - DEC has training classes.
- What type of computer hardware do we need for the GIS software?
 - The general consensus is that we need a fairly high power computer with lots of RAM and a separate video card, but we really don't have any definitive information at this point.
- How much will the GIS software cost?
 - ArcGIS (sp?) is roughly \$2k and is definitely sufficient for what we need, but also may be overkill.
 - It is possible that we could even obtain something for around \$200 that might be sufficient.
- How do we make the information available to the public.
 - A good quality printer seems the obvious choice, but because the maps will be so large and detailed it will need to be a large format printer.
 - Large format printers are very expensive.
 - Would we be as well off with a projector as well as a printer?
 - The projector will be much better for public presentations as a large group can all see at once.
 - The drawback to a projector versus a printed map is in recording information from the public meetings.
 - With a printed map people could simply pencil their information directly onto the map.
 - With a projector someone would need to enter the information in real-time into the GIS software or record it in notes (without the map for a reference) and input it into the GIS later.
 - We can also present the information on the town's website?
 - However, we can't do ourselves and the updating is slow because we don't have a full time webmaster.
 - All information must pass through John Ward and the webmaster.

Alta East

- Previously reviewed gas station / convenience store / large truck sales proposal at the intersection of 17 and 302.
- Sal has drafted a letter recommending more Bioretention areas.
- Kevin recommends amending the letter:
 - Replacing "less that 1/3" with "less than 1/2 of dissolved".
 - Let the site engineers figure out how to do it rather than making specific recommendations.

Globe Contracting

- Previously reviewed this proposal and submitted comments to planning board.
- Based upon our recommendations, the applicant won't store equipment and/or build structures on the stream side of the road.

Tetz

- Up before the planning board soon.
- Our recommendations will remain the same as previously submitted.
- One additional suggestion to help alleviate the closeness of the cemetery issue is to get cemetery to sell / lease enough land to Tetz to create a noise / dust buffer along the access road.

PDR

- The town board has still not assigned a specific PDR implementation board.
- No law to authorize the PDR program has been passed yet.

Site clearing on Ingrassia road for which we haven't seen a development application

- There has been significant additional activity lately.
- Code enforcement has been contacted. They report that several violations have already been issued to the person clearing the site.
- General lessons from this site.
 - The town needs an ordinance to prevent clearing of property without a permit.
 - Developers clear the property in advance so that when they submit the development there isn't any inconvenient trees / wetlands to hold up the development permit.
 - We could tie the "no clearing" law into the storm water law.
 - The state already has 1 acre limit, but our local law could be more restrictive.
 - We have recommended this already, but so far as we know no action has been taken.
 - Sal will check on the status.
 - Placing a time limit on building permits would also be important because some permits have been issued before stricter environmental regulations were imposed.

Future Projects

- Tree cover – Mike will investigate / spearhead.
- Sidewalks – Sal will investigate / spearhead.
- Reduction of pollutants in storm water runoff
- Pace on-line course for land use. Everyone should complete.

Adjourned

Motion to adjourn by Jon Paul. Seconded by Sal. 9:20.

Copies:

- Mike – 7 copies of 4 page meeting notes.
- Sal – 7 copies of a 7 page Agenda.