**Town of Knox Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Notes 7:30 PM August 18, 2022**

Attending: Eric Marczak, Nelson Kent, Brigitte McAuliffe, Amy Pokorny

Brigitte opened the meeting at about 7:35 and Eric arrived shortly after.

Housekeeping

* Draft notes from the meetings of March 19 and April 21, May 19 and June 16 were approved.
* Notes from the July 21 meeting need to have some corrections. Amy will reach out to Thom Engel for answers.
* Peter was appointed by the town board to the CAC membership.
* Shawn sent a letter offering to fill in as an alternate if that is allowable.
* New Knox resident Adam Yagelski (husband of Sarah Walsh, associate director of Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy) would like to join the CAC, or help with our projects.

Education and Outreach

* We want to increase transparency and build credibility for the CAC. We’ll post draft proposals on the website.
* Westchester CAC website has tips on how to deal with news media/give interviews.
* We can compile an updated collection of USGS maps and DOT topographical maps of Knox
* Traci has updated the website.
	+ For website, newsletter:
		- mission statement
		- We aren’t anti-development. We are for responsible development.
		- We are a resource for the planning board, town board and the ZBA.
		- Vision
		- What we have accomplished, explain that help came from many in wider community
		- Goals
			* We want to make sure we all have clean water to drink in the next X years

Wetlands Boardwalk Restoration Project

* Nelson sent information from Bob Fredericks about bog bridge construction.
	+ Invite Adam Yagelski and Dick Dexter to attend the meeting with Bob Fredericks
* Lois Klatt will send updates for the inventory of flora and fauna of the Knox Wetlands.
* The Knox Wetlands are the result of beaver activity.
	+ That area was planted with buckwheat 50 or more years ago when Lou Stevens operated the farm Joe Hughes now owns, per longtime resident Dick Dexter.
	+ Dick hunted there in the past, knows where the springs are.
* Town Councilman Karl Pritchard is in the local snowmobile club, and he wants to coordinate our project with their trail through that area.
	+ Snowmobile bridge over stream in town park east of wetlands is over 100’ from wetlands so no DEC permit is needed for repairs.
	+ We could propose removing the culvert and building a bridge, combining that project with the boardwalk project.
	+ A direct line from north parking lot in town park to kiosk parking lot is about 600’.
* Deb Breitenbach shared information about grants that might be available for this purpose.
	+ Albany Soil & Water Conservation is giving grants up to $30,000, Susan Lewis is the contact.
* Nelson will arrange a meeting at the wetlands with Bob Fredericks, bog bridge construction expert, to discuss:
	+ A possible trail from the existing parking lot at the north end of the town park to the wetlands kiosk
		- Span across the stream is about 20’
		- Downstream a short distance farther the span is narrower.
* A spring on Archie and Bonnie Martell’s land feeds the wetland.
* Eric will look at DEC’s application process for projects in wetlands.
* Nelson will help with construction plans and drawings.

Project Ideas

* **Prepare an Open Space Inventory (OSI): “**State enabling legislation directs CACs to complete an open space inventory (OSI) prioritizing open areas in a municipality for conservation based on natural, scenic, and cultural values.” “An OSI is often developed within a broader open space plan, which outlines strategies for the conservation and stewardship of priority lands, and serves to complement and inform the local comprehensive plan.”
* **Prepare a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI): “**A natural resources inventory maps and describes these resources and is the implicit foundation for an OSI. On the basis of this information, an OSI lists important lands in the community according to priority for conservation or acquisition and displays them on an open space map.”
	+ Peter sent CAC members documentation for:
		- 2004 Hydrogeologic Study of the Karst Aquifer Located in the Central Section of the Town of Knox, Albany County, New York by Jeremy Patrick Lundy
		- Knox Hamlet Groundwater Study by the Knox Conservation Advisory Council
		- Town of Knox Geology power point presentation by Thom Engel. We will discuss this material next month.
	+ Peter can take the lead on the natural resource inventory.
	+ Knox Town Board will be asked to adopt the inventory.
	+ Security and safety concerns for locations of caves and cave entrances:
		- Dick Dexter knows where sink holes are.
* Study the prevalence of **toxins in Knox**
* Prepare an **index of maps**
* **Solicit experts to speak** about water quality, karst geology and hydrology, tick control, elements of property values, other topics
* **Develop a survey** to ask residents about their water quality, why they live in Knox, what they value about living in Knox
	+ Proposed survey questions:
		- Are you living in Knox because you enjoy the surroundings and you want to be here?
		- Are you living here because you have no other choice and you would like to move somewhere else if/when the opportunity arises?
* Participate in promoting Household Hazardous Waste Collection event, facilitate removal of old chemicals in barns – agricultural, pest control, ...
* Promote update of comprehensive plan
	+ The comprehensive plan and the resource inventory will serve as a basis for making decisions.
	+ SEQRs: geological features must be considered, as well as vulnerable habitats for plants and animals.
* Work to become a Conservation Advisory Board
	+ Brigitte has research skills and experience interpreting legalese.

Other Discussion

* Amy will ask if CAC members can subscribe to the Towns & Topics magazine put out by the NYS Association of Towns.

Eric moved for adjournment, Nelson seconded and all approved at about 8:40 PM.