

MINUTES – TOWN OF OLIVE CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
February 9, 2022, 600pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

1. Roll Call. Dan White, Simon Strauss – co-chairs; Chester Karwatowski, Matt Kovner. Also present Town Board liaison Victoria Read, Nick Bodnar (Onteora High School), Jac Conaway, Jo Ostrander, Nishiel Patel, and David Edinger, Zoom host.
2. Approval of January 12, 2022 OCAC minutes. Approved.
3. New member(s) to replace Don DiMartini – notice on the Town website; Onteora students – see https://townofolive.org/job_opportunities/olive-conservation-advisory-council-vacancy/ - status – Dan. There has been a surge of interest in the OCAC; our aim is to determine those who would like their names put forward as members or associate members (we are limited by Town law to 5 members; New York State permits up to 9 members, we can have unlimited associate members) in March for presentation to the Town Board (letter of interest and resume required from the potential interested member or associate member) in April.

Policies and Projects:

External Town:

4. Coordination with other CACs/ECCs – Dan. Ann Belmont from Rochester joined our January meeting; John Messerschmidt from Rochester has also been in touch.

Topics discussed that have cross-town interest:

- a. Pollinator Pathways – we plan to relocate the existing pollinator garden from the American Legion to Jo Ostrander’s property at the corner of Mountain Road and Rt 28 in Shokan, and to work with the ECO Club at Onteora High School on their plans to expand the use of a quad at the School to become a pollinator garden in addition to the existing raised beds, composting and rain barrel there. Consider coordinating with the Boiceville Visioning project as they envision pollinator gardens/native plant habitats on some of the 6 lots to become parkland in Boiceville. Also coordinate with Woodstock Land Conservancy (Karine Duteil) on a network of pollinator gardens – there is an aim to recruit 100 households with 1/8 acre each for native plant habitats.
- b. Education programs – film program. Dan to coordinate, either at the Library or the Olivebridge firehouse.
- c. Outreach – emulate the Town of Rochester – with Facebook page, newsletter etc.
- d. Mailing list – aim for joint program with other local organizations concerned about the environment, e.g. the group that gathered opposition to the planned pumped hydro project, Olive Democrats, Nextdoor (the App).

- e. Website update – add a Mission Statement for OCAC, a project list and a news section e.g. for upcoming events like the Home Energy Efficiency workshop due on June 14, 2022.
 - f. Communications – Matt agreed to be OCAC communications czar and work with Jo – on website updates, newsletter etc.
5. Climate Smart Communities and certification (“CSC”) – Matt. The Town is aiming to achieve Bronze status – need to get the ASHRAE audits completed, then submit to NYSERDA for review of the actions the Town has completed.

Matt’s memo outlining the Town’s participation, with Cornell Cooperative Extension support, in clean energy audits, is attached. There will be a workshop at the Olive Free Library on June 14th.

Also consider the Town’s participation in NYS’s Clean Energy Communities program, which is related to but with some different actions from, the CSC program, and also offers grants for energy conservation and other measures – Matt to evaluate Olive’s participation and possible grants arising.

Community Choice Aggregation was discussed here since it is one of the High Impact items under each program. Simon provided an update on the Kingston program – the Council decided to defer CCA decision until September – if we don’t have a Kingston decision by then, then consider recommending to the Town Board that Olive join one of the existing CCA programs. Jeff Domanski of Hudson Valley Community Power had called Simon recently seeking an update.

Internal Town:

- 6. Solar mapping – Dan and Spencer. “Going slow” on solar mapping effort for now – weave into Land Use/Comprehensive Plan . Take off agenda for the time being.
- 7. Grant for Open Space Inventory, trajectory towards Comprehensive Plan – Dan and Chet. Dan has made contacts – NYS DEC’s Community Forest Preservation Program; response is expected via the DEC portal. Other organizations – e.g. Hudson River Estuary Program (Chet) and possible ARPA funding. Vikki Read reported that there is currently on timetable for the Comprehensive Plan and that it will be discussed at the upcoming Town Board meeting.
- 8. Solar code/local law – Simon and Jac. No progress.
- 9. LED Street Lights – Simon. No progress; information needed to present to NYPA for updated proposal from them.

10. Native plant habitat/pollinator garden – Dan and Jac. Jac and Dan are to meet to review possible sites, including part of Boiceville visioning project and in the OCSD quad.
11. Education Program – Dan. See 4b above.
12. Boiceville Visioning – Dan and Simon. Dan reported that Cynthia Nikitin has been extremely helpful in coordinating and bringing up new ideas; the students from OCSD participating are presenting the status of the project to the Town Board at their next meeting.

Administration:

13. Town webpage and mechanics for including OCAC updates. Dianna Carchidi for updates and Rebecca DeGondea for calendar additions.
14. Trello Project Management Software update – Spencer. Spencer not available today so this item deferred to the next meeting.

Other:

15. Other business. Sustainable Hudson Valley has two sessions on February 17 and 18 to discuss the Regional Climate Action Strategy.

Memo re: Community Energy Efficiency Program for Olive Town Residents

The Olive Conservation Advisory Council (OCAC) has partnered with the Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) to offer town residents – both owners and renters – the opportunity to get free or low-cost energy assessments of their homes. Once the assessments have been done, recommendations will be made to the residents on how to make their home more energy efficient.

Then, depending on income level, these recommendations can be undertaken either free of charge under the State's Empower program, or at lower, subsidized costs under the Assisted Home Performance with Energy Star Program. If a resident is in a higher income bracket than the Empower program allows, a choice of contractors will be provided that the residents can get pricing from, under the Assisted Home Performance with Energy Star program

This program will save residents money and help the Town of Olive combat climate change by reducing the use of oil, gas and electricity in the town.

Here is how the program will work:

The CCE and the OCAC will work together to design a postcard and fliers to mail and hand out, which will describe the program. Once these promotional pieces are approved, they will be mailed to all town households (approximately 1700), and the fliers will be posted around town.

The promotional pieces will feature the fact that the kickoff to this program will be a workshop at the Olive Free Library, and encourage residents to come listen to an energy efficiency presentation by the CCE. At this workshop, residents will be able to fill out an application to begin the process of getting an energy assessment for their home.

The timeline is to create the promotional pieces by the end of March, with feedback from the OCAC, the CCE and the Town Board. Once approved, we will arrange for fliers to be printed up, and we can hand them out around town during April and May. These pieces will highlight the workshop at the Library, which is scheduled to take place on June 14th, in the early evening.

In May, we will print and mail 1700 postcards and send them to all town residents, inviting them to attend this important workshop. As with our Community Solar Program, we are looking to have between 1 and 2% of households sign up for these energy assessments.

We will pay for the fliers from the \$5,000 in grant funds we have received from the Town's successful Community Solar campaign. There will be no further cost to the Town or to the OCAC beyond the cost of printing and mailing these promotional pieces.

We ask that the Town Board approve this Community Efficiency Program, and allow the OCAC to move ahead with the planning, creating, printing and mailing of the promotional pieces, and the staffing of the workshop at the Library by OCAC members.