

Town of Shawangunk EMC minutes 2-9-2021,

Present: Dave Haldeman, Dave Tompkins, Steve landsman, Andy domenech, Joanne Warren

Absent: Julia Craner, Patty Lee Parmalee

Conservation easement review materials were not available at this time from the town office

In discussion with town attorney, Rich Hoyt, it was suggested that our desire to review all building lots from an environmental standpoint after most (at least in the last 10 to 15 years) already had site mapped plans (which include the location of any possible building and which can only be deviated by 25% once construction begins) approved by the planning board (currently we review only when requested by the Planning Board). It was suggested by Mr. Hoyt that he approach the Planning board chair and see if the EMC would be able to review ALL pending applications before the board early in the process. We were still uncertain as to how to access those individual properties which never went before the board.

Solar and battery storage installations we again discussed: especially since the solar farm on the Garrison property is again being discussed. Since the Town has failed to enact any battery storage law, despite our request, Mr. Hoyt will ask John Valk and the Town Board to place a moratorium on any battery storage until such a law can be approved. The only other issue concerning solar which came before the county EMC was the fact that the state Dept of Agriculture has apparently opened up even prime farmland to solar fields.

Rail trail: Last year Watchtower farms had agreed to open up and grade the North extension of the rail trail. Then came covid and those plans were halted. After that John Valk asked the Town's highway department to see if they would work on that project (paid, after hours) They began work and quickly discovered that they needed to widen the trail to accommodate their grader. This resulted in mass cutting of trees lining the trail and thus far no grading of the trail. There is concern that there is little thought going into which trees to cut down and how they plan to remove the stumps. Further, they have only gone about half way up the trail before all work ceased for hunting season and the winter months. Currently, we are uncertain when work will resume and how they plan to proceed.

Since the state's governor vetoed the bill which offered additional protection to Class C waterways we will put together our own proposal to expand buffer protection along our Class C streams. Additionally, we have been unable to interest any other landowners who have properties along these stream or rivers to allow us to plant shrubs or trees along the banks of the waterways through the Trees for Tribes program.

Lighting: currently all town owned buildings have been upgraded to energy efficient LED lighting except for the Town hall. Street lighting changes continue to be replaced by Central Hudson on a case by case basis.

Tree seedlings: apparently John Valk has again gotten the distribution of seedlings which were intended to be distributed during this year's St. Patrick Day parade (which again has been cancelled due to Covid) postponed until next year unless we wish to try to distribute these seedlings this fall.

County news:

Many towns along the lower Esopus Creek are continuing to be alarmed by the turbid, muddy discharges which are causing extensive environmental and economic damage to the creek by the DEP from the Ashokan reservoir. Currently the DEC is reviewing proposed changes to that process and the towns are requesting that the DEP fully recognize the problems their releases are causing and take measures (dilution or filtration) to mitigate the problem.

The county environment and energy committee finally passed the solid waste law but no real discussion about future landfill needs or other technology to take care of the non-recycled waste have taken place

CSC: Joanne is looking into ways to advance recycling within the town and some other ways to get grant money . (We had applied for a climate smart grant but did not receive it). Andy and Joanne re aware that they need to get more people involved in their committee's efforts.

Gardiner EMC: the town proposed eliminating the EMC due to lack of meetings and participation and replacing it with a CAC. However that did not happen and the EMC is now receiving new members. It is bothering that the town is exploring the possibility of removing protections from developments on the ridge.

Next meeting: April 13th , 7PM