

ROLL CALL:

- Members Present - Robert Amadon, Chairperson
Evelyn Hicks
Barbara Lipiew
Ryan Taylor
Ben Szablewski
Councilmember Scott Robertson
- Absent - Thomas Mudd, Jr.
Adam Reger

Associate Members present: Brittany Hernon

WELCOME

Chairperson Amadon opened the meeting.

MINUTES APPROVAL

Motion by Mr. Taylor, seconded by Ms. Lipiew to approve the meeting minutes of December 9, 2024.

Ayes: All Noes: None Abstain: None Motion Carried

ISSUES OF THE PUBLIC

Carol Yetter of the Burchfield Nature and Art Center spoke again of the room available to the Environmental Commission and of the opportunity to provide information to the many visitors to the Center. Ms. Yetter asked the commission to let her know if she should make the space available to another organization if the commission is not going to utilize the space. Ms. Lipiew suggested the commission could sponsor other groups that will provide educational programs. Ms. Hernon stated she can discuss this with her employer, Prism. Ms. Hicks stated she and Ms. Lipiew plan to identify Environmental Commission items currently located at the Christian Metz House.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence received by the commission.

ONGOING COMMISSION PROJECTS

Bikes

Councilmember Robertson provided information from the Supervisor's Office

- ✓ Specifications for bike lanes make them almost impossible to install
- ✓ The county and state own most roads that bike lanes are requested on
- ✓ Bike routes have less requirements, for example, wider shoulders and signage, and the county added a bike route to Center Road

Ms. Hicks reiterated the need for a transportation master plan and stated the commission should not continue to discuss this item but recommend to the Town Board to include a Transportation Plan when the town's Comprehensive Plan is revisited. Ms. Hicks stated paper streets could be used to connect neighborhoods, also. Councilmember Robertson stated these paths would require security features. Secretary Martin referred to the resident that advocates for bike safety on the roadways because he uses a bike for transportation.

Motion by Ms. Hicks, seconded by Ms. Lipiew, to recommend to the Town Board include the concept of a Transportation Master Plan in the next Comprehensive Plan update.

Ayes: All

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

Trees

1. Tree Inventory Grant updates:

- ✓ Supervisor Dickson has signed the contract, Councilmember Robertson stated the state has not executed the contract
- ✓ Councilmember Robertson stated the commission needs to provide an RFP for the tree inventory, Chairperson Amadon does not believe the commission is authorized or qualified to issue an RFP and the town applied for the grant on the Environmental Commission's recommendation
- ✓ Councilmember Robertson recommended the Environmental Commission communicate with the Supervisor's Office, Highway Superintendent Adams, and Town Attorney for guidance

Chairperson Amadon stated he will follow up accordingly.

2. Revised tree list – Councilmember Robertson encouraged Chairperson Amadon to communicate with himself and Town Attorney Trapp for updates on outstanding items and provided the following information:

- ✓ Per Mr. Trapp: Chapter 110 deals with the removal of trees and limitations that exist, and provided legal advice on youth members in 2023
- ✓ Highway Superintendent Adams advised the tree list has been updated on the website
- ✓ Regarding Covington Drive: NYSEG and their third-party contractor have agreed to replanting trees along the road in the spring – Ms. Lipiew asked if NYSEG and their contractor will provide ongoing maintenance and expects the deer to kill 25%. Ms. Hicks requested NYSEG be reminded of the town's policy to plant different species of trees, the trees cannot be limited to one type.

Secretary Martin stated she recalled the need for the town code to be revised to change the tree list. Ms. Hicks stated the subdivision code includes the tree list. Councilmember Robertson stated the updated list is available on the website and questioned what is considered a subdivision.

Chairperson Amadon stated he will re-send the letter from March 2023 with the updated tree list to Councilmember Robertson and Mr. Trapp.

3. Maintenance of new trees – Councilmember Robertson provided the following information from Highway Superintendent Adams:

- ✓ Burchfield volunteers can maintain the newly planted trees
- ✓ Re-plant program has been funded for the current year and will be addressed as time allows – Ms. Lipiew expressed concerns about maintenance. Councilmember Robertson stated the Buildings and Grounds Department cannot be responsible for maintenance. Ms. Hicks agreed and stated volunteers are vital and suggested providing a "best practices" guideline to be followed when planting the trees. Chairperson Amadon stated the grant requires public participation and concerns about additional concerns about maintaining the newly planted trees were repeated. Councilmember Robertson stated the Highway Department leaves literature for the property owners when re-planting trees. Ms. Hernon suggested ideas to generate and monitor community engagement when the tree grant is underway.

Waterways

1. Storm drain medallions – The Highway Department will install the medallions.
2. Past grants – Ms. Hicks provided the following information:
 - ✓ Provided the link to the Smokes Creek Habitat to be added to the town’s Environmental Corner webpage
 - ✓ Buffalo Creek stream bank stabilization project is on hold pending receipt of property owners’ authorizations

Community Needs and Interests, etc.

Governance

- a. The commission will discuss adding a Co-Vice Chair – The commission members agreed to proceed with this suggestion.
- b. Two vacancies in 2025, one is a youth member – Chairperson Amadon stated Kathleen Duffy will be appointed at the upcoming Town Board Meeting and the youth member position is still open.
- c. Motion by Chairperson Amadon, seconded by Ms. Hicks, to nominate Daniell Bagley as an associate commission member.

Ayes: All Noes: None Abstain: None Motion Carried

Chairperson Amadon stated a formal vote will be held at the February meeting.

New Business

Ms. Hicks referred to new wetlands and freshwater regulations from the DEC that went into effect January 1, 2025, as amendments to the Freshwater Wetlands Act passed in 2022. A link will be added to the Environmental Corner webpage.

Other

- a. Utilize the March 2025 and November 2025 meetings to review the commission’s planning document.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ms. Hicks, seconded by Mr. Taylor, to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 P.M.

Margaret A. Martin
Deputy Town Clerk/Secretary to the Environmental Commission