

Peekskill Conservation Advisory Council

Report to the Mayor and Common Council for Calendar Year Ended December 31, 2012

As required by the City Code, this annual report summarizes the actions of the Conservation Advisory Council for 2012. For more detailed information, please refer to copies of calendar year 2012 minutes, which are attached to, and made part of, this report.

Composition of CAC in 2012

Members of the Peekskill Conservation Advisory Council are: Carol Capobianco, Chair; Pat Reber, Vice Chair; Kay Barthelmes, Corresponding Secretary; Leigh Draper; Chris Gomez; Dorothy Leslie; and Jeff Miller. Terms expire in 2014 for all members except Chris Gomez and Jeff Miller, whose terms expire in 2013.

Jeremy Doxsee, Peekskill Planning Department, attends meetings as the City liaison and Recording Secretary.

The president of the High School Environmental Club regularly attended meetings through May.

Activities and Achievements

Filled Vacancy on CAC

At the start of the year, one seat was vacant. Members reached out to potential candidates and were successful in filling the remaining vacancy. There are now seven members, as called for in the ordinance.

We included at our meetings members of the newly formed Parks Advisory Board—Jeanne Romeau, Laura Perkins, and Dominic Perruccio—as they continue to fill the seats on their board. Many areas of concern overlap with CAC, and their input was valuable in our discussions.

Continued to Develop Open Space and Wetlands Inventories

Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) digital mapping data, the CAC has identified and generated a database for all wetlands, open space, and vacant parcels citywide. The database contains various attributes, including ownership, development potential, and existing environmental

features (steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains, etc.), for each individual parcel. The database links to a corresponding map that enables a comprehensive view of the City's environmental resources in unprecedented ways. Council members are now prioritizing lots and developing a format for making field verification more efficient.

Once completed, the inventory will serve as the foundation to prioritize and recommend implementation strategies to preserve and protect the City's critical vacant lands, open space, and wetlands. It will also contain advanced mapping capabilities that can be incorporated into the city's future planning efforts.

Continued Researching, Restoring, and Maintaining MacGregory Brook

We continued to maintain the restoration site on the south bank of MacGregory Brook between the railroad tracks and the Hudson River. CAC members watered the young plants during the dry weeks of summer, and weeded and spread mulch provided by the City around each plant. We also established rope fencing and markers to clearly indicate that the area is newly planted.

We created a four-minute video about the project, which we presented as part of our report about MacGregory Brook to the Common Council at one of its work sessions. In addition, in fulfillment of grant requirements, CAC members gave a Powerpoint presentation about the MacGregory Brook project and watershed protection in general to the Peekskill Garden Club.

Developed Content for the CAC Pages on the City's Website

We created webpages for the City's website to establish a presence on the site so that the public knows about the commission and can get involved.

Organized Educational Outreach Presentation on Energy Efficiency

In conjunction with Energize NY, the CAC promoted and hosted an informational session for the community on energy efficiency at the Field Library, which the Mayor and Common Council members attended. The program included extensive information on how citizens can receive a free energy audit to save energy and money and offered assistance in signing up for the program. Two members of the CAC and our Planning Department liaison who had had energy audits done on their houses described their experiences.

Participated in the Annual Citywide Clean-up of City parks

Explored Possibility of Establishing Scenic Vista Park at 1410 Crompond Road

Reviewed tax maps, aerial photos, and historical information about the site. We presented to Common Council at a work session.

Other Outreach, Training, and Education

- January 5: Attended ELLA Steering Committee Meeting
- January 26: Provided City Manager potential storm-cleanup sites for NYS Labor Department assistance
- Feb. 4: Provided info and resources to City for Eagle Fest
- March 19: Presented reports on MacGregory Brook and other projects to Common Council work session
- March 29: Attended Regional Energy Leadership Summit
- April 17: Toured Fort Hill Park with Roger Sparling and Gene Panczenko
- April 21: Participated in the annual citywide clean-up of City parks
- April 26: Sat in and critiqued, by invitation, Middle School Environmental Club's presentation rehearsal on water quality for Wheelabrator Conference in Florida
- May 10: Middle School Environmental Club students attended CAC meeting (along with their faculty advisors and parents, about 30 in all) to present their research project on water quality
- June 14: Gene Panczenko, resident, attended CAC meeting for a discussion about Fort Hill
- June 21: Advised Common Council via letter on conservation concerns regarding proposed development of Hayes Plaza
- July 13: Alerted City to fish kill in Lake Mitchell
- September 28: Attended the Westchester County Conservation Café presentation on invasive plants
- October 2: Gave Powerpoint presentation about the MacGregory Brook project and watershed protection in general to the Peekskill Garden Club
- October 16: Promoted and hosted an informational session for the community on energy efficiency
- October 19: Commented via letter on the proposed budget's potential impact on CAC, parks, and the City
- November 15: Attended the all-day conference, "Revitalizing Hudson Riverfronts: Opportunities in an Era of Global Climate Change"

Objectives for calendar year 2013

Continue to develop Open Space and Wetlands inventory as mandated in Chapter 24 of the City Code.

Research Steep Slope Law as the first step in assessing environmental ordinances needed to protect the natural resources of the City.

Monitor and maintain restoration site of MacGregory Brook while the young plants are still getting established.

Participate in the annual clean-up of City parks.

Sponsor a public education outreach program on a conservation issue.

Advise Common Council on conservation issues and development impact as they arise throughout the year.