

Conservation Advisory Commission
Minutes of May 20, 2010 Meeting

Present: Stephen Appel, Curt Pueschel, Shepard Bennett, Richard Pastore, Michael Restuccia, Linda Green

Excused: Cynthia Stephens/Westerman

Minutes for the April 27th meeting were approved after corrections.

It was agreed that the third Thursday of each month is a workable meeting time, although some members will have to miss on occasion. Linda will not be able to attend at all in June, so the June meeting could meet at either the old or new time.

The map of Broome County gas leases for the years 2006-2008 that had been prepared by a student of Dr. Burrell Montz (BU, Geography) was discussed.

Copies of the Jones Park trail map with annotations by Dr. Julian Shepherd (BU, Biology) were distributed. The locations of different ages and types of forest are noted on the map. Also available is a listing of flora and bird fauna that Shepherd has compiled. In order for CAC to become more familiar with the history and plans for Jones Park, a discussion with Jim Bukowski, Superintendent of Vestal Parks, would be helpful, and it was agreed that he should be invited to a meeting. Items of particular interest in Jones Park include the prospect of wetlands development with the help of the Upper Susquehanna Coalition. CAC has promoted the idea that increasing water retention and infiltration in the uplands would have many benefits to the Town, so this possibility is one that we support in principle. Other topics of interest are those in the news: the prospect of gas extraction from under the park, the earlier debate about logging in the park, unapproved bike paths. We are interested in plans for the long term park management. There was also a question about the status of the former firing range near the park entrance.

A question was raised as to what are the consequences of a property being within an area designated as a critical environmental area. We will address this question in the next meeting after gathering more information.

Steve Appel reported on recent issues before the Planning Board. A new building to house offices of the United Health Services will be built on the site of the Press & Sun Bulletin after the present building is razed. Because the reworked site will be held to the more stringent stormwater retention rules now in effect, water quality of stormwater runoff from the new facility should improve.

It was noted that the controversy about the Rivercrest residential neighborhood, recently designated an historic area, continues (Press & Sun Bulletin May 18, 2010). Residents in the neighborhood are pursuing legal action against the Town for failing to enforce Town code on four properties, which allegedly are being allowed to deteriorate so that demolition and rezoning can be justified.