

Conservation Advisory Commission  
Minutes of the January 17, 2013 Meeting

Present: Curt Pueschel, Steve Appel, Michael Restuccia, Victor Lamoureux, Cynthia Stephens-Westerman, Shep Bennett, Cole Moore

Excused: Linda Green, Dick Pastore

Guest: Dr. Julian Shepherd, Department of Biological Sciences, Binghamton University

Minutes of the December 20 meeting were approved by e-mail vote. The next regular meeting of the CAC will be on February 21, 2013.

Dr. Shepherd recounted the history of his effort to identify an inventory of natural areas, both public and private in Broome County. The effort to protect IBM Glen was a catalyst to catalog such areas as a first step towards their preservation. Over the past decade, Dr. Shepherd has visited more than 240 locations, spending a few hours at each, and revisiting some locations during different seasons. His data base has been provided to the Planning Department of the Environmental Management Council. The inventory overlaps somewhat with the Open Space Inventory, but the emphasis here is on the natural quality of the locales. The sites have been prioritized by value. Protection of these areas can be a challenge. For example, the use of all-terrain vehicles can be very destructive to sensitive areas, and some drivers trespass on private or public lands and destroy signs and fences erected to keep them out.

In the discussion following Dr. Shepherd's departure, it was suggested that Dr. Shepherd's inventory of natural areas in Vestal should be attached to the minutes of this meeting. It was agreed that this was appropriate, but only after the names of private landowners are redacted.

Having an inventory of natural areas is extremely valuable, but it is only the first step in protecting them. To provide some degree of protection to the sites on the inventory, it was proposed that the CAC will request that we be consulted should projects involving these properties come before the Planning Board. We would then have the responsibility of evaluating the potential for damage to the natural areas on the site. The suggestion received unanimous support.

Discussion turned to the project of developing management plans for the Town parks. The CAC will pursue contact with the Parks Department and continue to look for good models of management plans.