

Conservation Advisory Commission
Minutes of the February 20, 2014 Meeting

Present: Curt Pueschel, Victor Lamoureux, Steve Appel, Linda Green, Adam Flint, and interns Megan Larson and Stephanie Craig

Excused: Cynthia Stephens-Westerman, Cole Moore, Shep Bennett, Michael Restuccia

The next regular meeting of the CAC will be on March 20, 2014.

Adam Flint was welcomed as a member following his appointment by the Town Board to the open position as an alternate member through 2015. However, he was not confirmed as our representative to the EMC, so that position remains vacant. Adam described New York Rising, a statewide program that is being initiated to increase storm preparedness and resiliency. He also spoke about his involvement in efforts to increase the use of solar power in the Southern Tier. There will be events promoting solar power at the Southern Tier Home Builders Home and Garden Show at BU during the last weekend of March and at the Vestal Public Library on April 24 at 7 PM.

Curt, Stephanie, and Megan attended a workshop of the BU Center for Integrated Watershed Studies and the Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC). The USC runs a variety of educational programs, ranging in length from four hours to three days, on stream management for local officials. If municipal officials, highway superintendent, or town engineer attend the workshop, it can lead to expedited permits should the need for work in streams arise.

Examples were given of actions taken by the USC in concert with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts to improve stream stability and natural flow. Of particular interest was berm removal and wetland creation. During our CAC visit to Richards Park, we came across extensive berms lining the lower reach of the stream that parallels State Line Road and feeds into Choconut Creek north of Richards Park. The berms bury the bases of trees on the streambank to an extent that the trees will probably not survive in the long term. USC's Jeremy Waddell, who was involved in the creation of ponds in Jones Park within the past few years, offered to meet with the CAC to describe USC activities.

Victor shared a mock-up of an informational page for identification of hemlock trees. We discussed ideas about how to best generate attractive and informative materials, possibly involving high school students, so that the process of moving the project forward would itself be part of the public information effort. Victor expressed his willingness to help residents with tree identification on-line and even by visiting properties if so requested by the landowners. As part of these outreach efforts, we could create a CAC G-mail account.