

Athens Conservation Advisory Council meeting minutes
April 21, 2022 via ZOOM

Members present: Bunting, Grilli, Lipsman, Little, Moree, Roth, Winslow

Members excused:

Members absent: Proper

Meeting guests present: Stephanie Facchine and Haley Gallo, both from NYS DOH; at least four residents from the first block of North Franklin Street

Chairman Lipsman convened the meeting at 6:32pm.

1. Welcome and introductions – participants introduced themselves.
2. Agenda review and approval – the agenda was approved by assent.
3. Approval of minutes of last meeting – the minutes of the meeting of March 31, 2022, were approved by assent.
4. Drinking Water Source Protection project – Ms. Facchine indicated that she had sent the goals and vision statements to the local health department and the water operator. Ms. Gallo presented on Key Component #2, including demonstrating a sample map of Hollister Lake and surrounds. Winslow stated the draft vision statement and more detailed map would be circulated in the next few days.

At the next meeting, we will again discuss vision and mapping.

5. Discussion of tree at 32 N. Franklin – the indication from arborist Schembari that the tree could be salvaged was presented to the Council.

After lengthy discussion on the tree (#146), including input from several residents who live on North Franklin near the tree, there was a motion to recommend to the Village Board that the tree be removed: Bunting, SECOND: Little. Six in favor, one abstention. Key issues included that even though the tree is healthy, it is too big for its location and the problem of overgrowth into the sidewalk area will only get worse. A built over sidewalk would be too steep and potentially difficult to maintain.

The homeowners at 32 N. Franklin offered to pay for a replacement tree and they were encouraged to make this kind offer directly to the Village Board.

Dr. Lipsman brought up a tree at 3rd and Warren that was brought to his attention shortly before the meeting began as being perhaps in imminent danger of falling. The group agree this should be referred urgently to DPW. Dr. Lipsman agreed to do this.

6. Discussion of possible Tree Law – after discussion of possible changes to penalties, the Council voted to forward the proposed law as is to the Village Board for consideration. Dr. Lipsman said he would send it first to fellow Village Trustee Nancy Poylo for formatting. Motion: Roth, SECOND: Bunting. Passed unanimously.
7. Discussion of possible Tree Management Program – placeholder item

8. Flood Resilience Handbook for Hudson River Public Access Sites – Dr. Lipsman shared with the group that a staff leader from DEC’s Hudson River Estuary Program indicated to him that the Program’s staff had recently expanded and it could be possible to work with Athens to develop a climate summary similar to what they’d done for [Hudson](#) a few years ago.

There was some brainstorming about how, if the HREP can help with this, it might make sense to reach out to the Village’s Waterfront Advisory Committee to see if they might be interested in partnering on it with the Council. This could perhaps then grow to include neighboring communities.

The themes here would be flood resilience, climate change adaptation, fostering natural spaces in addition to, as part of, or instead of more heavily structural development.

9. Member items

Ms. Grilli offered to help Dr. Lipsman come up with ideas for an Arbor Day celebration, to help the Village successfully apply for 2022 Tree City designation.

Ms. Moree said she would share an example of a brochure from Otis, Massachusetts, that gives residents tips on native and other appropriate species to plant. This seemed particularly relevant given that during the discussion of the tree removal on N. Franklin, there was interest in guidance on what tree would be best to plant there as a replacement. The group decided to discuss this further at an upcoming meeting.

10. Agenda for meeting of May 19, 2022 – the Village will likely adopt a recent state law that allows virtual meetings into 2024. If so, the CAC will continue to meet virtually, with the possibility of an in person gathering in the summer, either social or for a regular meeting, or some combination.

Items will carry through from the present agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Joshua Lipsman, MD