

Athens Conservation Advisory Council meeting minutes
September 15, 2022
Athens Firehouse

Members present: Grilli, Lipsman, Little, Roth

Members excused: Bunting, Moree, Winslow

Meeting guests present: Andrea Smallwood, Waterfront Advisory Committee (via Zoom); Jesenia Laureano, Hudson River Estuary Program of DEC + Cornell University (via Zoom); Angelo Schembari, CGL Arbor Services (via Zoom); Stephanie Facchine, NYS Department of Health, Bureau of Water Supply Protection (via Zoom)

Chairman Lipsman convened the meeting at 6:37pm.

1. Welcome and introductions – introductions were deferred.
2. Agenda review and approval – the agenda was approved by assent, with the addition of discussion of Tree #102
3. Approval of minutes of last meeting – the minutes of the meeting of August 18, 2022, were approved by assent.
4. Climate Summary – Jesenia Laureano walked the group through the Athens Climate Summary document, highlighting the three challenge areas of heat, drought, and flooding, and the opportunities they represent. She indicated that the next steps would be the generation of a Vulnerability Assessment and an Adaptation Plan. The group discussed watching for resources to allow for these next steps.

Ms. Smallwood oriented members to the New York State Local Waterfront Revitalization Program in Athens, and the role of the Athens Waterfront Advisory Committee that she chairs in implementing the LWRP. The CAC and the WAC will watch for opportunities to collaborate in the future.

5. Tree Inventory and Management Plan – Mr. Schembari indicated that almost all data have been entered and that data entry should be completed by the end of next week, which would allow for the generation of Inventory-based reports. The Management Plan would take another couple of weeks after that. He invited CAC members to provide input as to what specifically they might like to see in the Plan.

Ms. Little indicated FOA would provide a volunteer hours tally toward the Greenway grant reporting requirements.

6. Tree #102 – there was discussion with Mr. Schembari about this silver maple tree at 1st and Church. It is thought to be about 75-80 years old, which is end of lifespan for this species. There is decay at the base and dieback at the top of the canopy, suggesting root decay. Removal of this tree is a top priority. This tree is on the draft updated Inventory as recommended for removal.

There was discussion with Mr. Schembari of trees 248 and 249 (silver maples at 84 N. Franklin) and 241 (red maple on Goodrich). The removal necessity for the last of these (241) is not as imminent.

Motion Ms. Little, SECOND Ms. Grilli, to recommend to the Village Board removal of trees 102,248/249, and 241. Passed unanimously.

7. Arbor Day observance – Ms. Little mentioned that Friends of Athens intends to ask the Village Board for approval to prune the 40 trees that Friends of Athens planted in the past few years. This would happen in the next 6 weeks or so. There was agreement that the CAC would piggyback with FOA if the proposed pruning is approved to have a small kick-off ceremony with Village officials and the public that could serve as the Village's Arbor Day ceremony.

Motion to support the FOA request to the Village Board and to participate as a Village Arbor Day ceremony by Mr. Roth, SECOND Ms. Grilli, passed unanimously.

8. Tree Law – deferred to October
9. Drinking Water Source Protection project – deferred to October
10. Member items – Ms. Grilli suggested with regard to the proposal brought to the last meeting that some residents wanted to vista prune a street tree in front of their home, that perhaps the Village could have a policy that if one tree is removed, ten trees would need to be planted by the resident elsewhere in the Village. There was not sufficient time to discuss this fully.
11. Agenda for meeting of October 20, 2022 – the meeting will include the Drinking Water Source Protection project, the Tree Inventory and Management Plan, and the Tree Law.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Joshua Lipsman, MD