

## Athens Conservation Advisory Council meeting minutes

August 21, 2025

Via Zoom

Members present: Bradicich, Reed, Brunner, Moree

Members absent: Sprague, Braine, Gillespie

Meeting guests present: Alyssa Bement, NYS DOH, Lindsey Strehlau-Howay, Cornell Cooperative Extension

Chairman Bradicich convened the meeting at 6:33pm.

1. Stephan Bradicich introduced himself as new CAC chairman, Mayor Serrago appointed Stephan to take over for Josh Lipsman who resigned after the July meeting.
2. Agenda review and approval – Ms. Reed asked for copy of agenda, Mr. Bradicich emailed a copy to all members. Discussion of who would be secretary for the meeting, Mr. Brunner said the mayor asked him to take on the role at the last Village Board meeting.
3. Approval of minutes of last meeting – June meeting minutes approved, Ms. Moree motioned and Mr. Brunner seconded. All in favor.
4. Drinking Water Source Protection project – Alyssa Bement attended to discuss Steve Winkley's report, asked group to make comments on draft report. Ms. Moree reported that the Town and Village of Cossackie are working on a comprehensive plan and this report helped with discussions on that plan. Mr. Winkley is expected to have the final version completed in September.  
Mr. Bradicich asked the group to review Mr. Winkley's report in the next two weeks. The Village Board should approve final version before it is shared with Town/Village of Cossackie and Town of Athens. Discussion of budget for mailers to approximately 80 homes in the watershed, estimated to cost around \$300. Review of action list and next steps.
5. Disaster Preparedness Education project – Ms. Strehlau-Howay discussed implementation, rack cards and web page. Mr. Bradicich asked if the resolution needed to be approved before the web page was completed. Ms. Strehlau-Howay said it was ok to approve by the end of the year. Action list was shared with the group and next steps to be completed. Mr. Bradicich will handle social media outreach and web page will be supplied to the mayor to add to the village website. Images of rack cards were shared with the group, no objection to look of cards. Mr. Bradicich asked about flood plain map being added to card or web page. Ms. Strehlau-Howay went over 12 month social media plan, one topic for each month, targeted towards Facebook posting. Ms. Moree asked if there were any school age appropriate versions of the materials.
6. Habitat Mapping Proposal update – Mr. Bradicich said the work plan and budget was approved, waiting for state approval. Ms. Moree asked about contract since it was specific to Hudsonia. Mr. Bradicich will look into if it is a prewritten contract to be filled out. Ms. Moree brought up issues with timeline of work and if winter would impede work on the project.
7. Native planting resources – Ms. Moree talked about how topic came about through the Village Board and their desire for the CAC to come up with recommendations on pollinator

gardens and planting in the right of way. Mr. Brunner said Village Board was more concerned with location than types of plants. Also Mr. Gillespie was working on a list of gardens as well as some recommendations. Mr. Bradicich asked group for copies of any literature that was sent out on pollinator gardens. Also he will ask the Village Board for clarification on what they need from CAC. Ms. Reed believes we should shy away from dictating specific species of plants. Mr. Brunner and Ms. Moree talked about village code and enforcement. Mr. Bradicich asked if the CAC has a mission statement and if this is in our scope as a CAC. Ms. Reed discussed potential code or zoning changes to define what a garden is.

#### 8. DEC Community Forest Management Plan Implementation – Contract in final stages, need RFP

Ms. Moree discussed original contract start date of September 1, 2024, delays at the state level leave us with less time than the original three year contract period. Ms. Moree discussed RFP, includes planting, stump removal, training and then an update of the tree inventory at the end of the project. Discussion of pursuing a “best value” RFP and not necessarily “straight price” because we are looking for native trees and diversity in types of trees as well as a short time frame of two years.

Ms. Moree brought up previous estimates of \$1500 per tree that included planting, outreach and education. Also discussed larger trees recently planted at Brice Marden Memorial Garden. Ms. Reed recommended we use bare root trees for better long term tree health. Also grant is based on our tree management plan that suggested bare root trees. The bare root trees are not necessarily small but can be three inch diameter or larger.

Highlights of RFP: 50 invasive trees to be removed, 32 damaged and diseased trees to be removed. Total of 200 trees to be planted and maintenance of planted trees. Tree education, training, community outreach and updated tree inventory.

Discussion of potential for different vendors handling parts of project. Mr. Brunner asked about a warranty on trees, Mr. Bradicich said it is in the contract that trees have to have a 95% survival rate through 2027. Ms. Reed asked that bidding should be broken down into three sections of planting, removal and training. Also RFP should include arborist standards of planting and maintenance or preference to vendors who can adhere to those standards. Stump removal discussion.

Ms. Moree brought up scoring of bids, three people needed, weight given to bids that can meet aggressive timeline and requested standards. Bid needs to be up for three weeks. Discussion of outreach to potential vendors.

Ms. Moree asked who would be monitoring bills and invoicing as well as validating that work was completed. Mr. Bradicich will ask the mayor and believed a Village Board member will be assigned the task.

Ms. Reed brought up that we have a new urban forester assigned to us that can be a resource. Also that Mr. Braine wants to be involved in community outreach events. Ms. Moree talked about his idea to reuse trees that are coming down. Ms. Reed talked about the state wanting us to find uses for trees instead of them just being chipped. Also mentioned Mr. Braine wanting to take cuttings for tree cookie prints, possible use in furniture and woodworking to be auctioned for community fundraising.

#### 9. Member items – No new business to discuss

10. Agenda for September meeting – Similar format, discussion on continuing with Zoom meetings. Ms. Reed suggested we meet in person at least once or twice a year. Ms. Moree

suggested we convert one of our Thursday meetings into an outreach session for the tree project.

Ms. Moree motion to adjourn and Ms. Reed seconded, all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 7:51pm.