

Athens Conservation Advisory Council meeting minutes

September 21, 2025

Via Zoom

Members present: Bradicich, Reed, Brunner, Braine

Members absent: Sprague, Moree, Gillespie

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

Chairman Bradicich convened the meeting at 6:35pm.

1. Agenda review – No changes to meeting agenda

2. Approval of August meeting minutes – deferred until quorum later in meeting

3. Drinking Water Source Protection project - Alyssa Bement went over plan for brochure distribution, estimated cost of \$300 to \$400 for printing and mailing in spring of 2026, goal is to have land owners in the watershed aware of their presence in the watershed and what steps they can take to protect the water source. Mr. Braine asked about septic system replacement assistance. Alyssa talked about EFC Septic System Replacement Fund, might be available for Hollister Lake, she will get back to the CAC with an answer. Mr. Braine asked about criteria for determining septic system failure and what would be a priority. Steve Winkley said Hollister Lake would qualify and assistance would be available if septic system was failing or close to failure. Discussion on criteria and potential funding. Mr. Bradicich asked to have information on the replacement program added to the mailer. Mr. Winkley talked about other lakes in the area that are part of the program. Ms. Reed discussed Trees for Tribes program that could be available for protecting the watershed. Mr. Bradicich asked about next steps after Village Board funding is approved, Ms. Bement said that village and CAC should handle the mailing of brochures, Mr. Winkley has a list of land owners in the watershed. Mr. Brunner asked about printing extra brochures to hand out at village and town offices. Ms. Bement agreed that extra brochures should be printed for the Town of Athens and Coxsackie offices. Ms. Reed talked about having extra for handing out at Community Day table.

Steve Winkley gave presentation on report and recommendations. Discussion on recommendation of maintaining vegetative areas around the lake. Mr. Bradicich asked about property owners who own land bordering the lake and if they need approval from the Town and Village for improvements. Mr. Winkley said it would be the town only. Mr. Bradicich is concerned about the village being aware of or being notified of development around the lake. Discussion on topic and a possible recommendation for notification to village. Next recommendation was to have a 15% impervious coverage in the Town of Coxsackie and not just the Town of Athens. Discussion on impervious coverage definition and effect on water quality in the lake. Mr. Braine asked about cobblestone driveways and how impervious they are. The third recommendation that Mr. Winkley talked about was restrictions on building on steep slopes, limit to 15% or closely manage development on steeper slopes. Recommendation for bringing SWPPP, Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan, up to current state standards. Recommendation to designate Hollister Lake a CEA(Critical Environmental Area), will help during SEQR process and trigger questions for a developer in that area. Both towns would have to hold public hearings and pass a resolution. Next steps after the

recommendations are for Mr. Winkley to meet with the planning boards in Athens and Cossackie. Mr. Bradicich asked why not meet with town boards and after discussion Mr. Winkley believed a representative from those boards could attend the planning board meeting. Discussion on process and potential language for changes to regulations or zoning. Discussion on timeline and next steps, CAC approved Mr. Winkley's report. Mr. Bradicich will work on timeline for notifying boards and presentation to both boards before the end of 2025.

4. Disaster Preparedness Education project – Lindsey Strehlau-Howay discussed next steps and web page creation. Example web pages were presented, CAC agreed with a style that would match current village website. Ms. Reed said she was willing to help mayor with website updates. Email will be sent to the Mayor with recommendation and links to examples of web pages. Brochures will be printed after web page is created so links can be added to the materials. Community outreach through social media will start in January. We will need to set a date for a community Zoom meeting to discuss the project.

5. Habitat Mapping Proposal update – Discussion on changes to work plan. Mr. Brunner asked about project start date of February 2025 and completion of project in 2026. Ms. Reed asked who made comments in the document. CAC went over document timeline and notes. Recommendation to pass on document to the Mayor for approval.

6. Native planting resources – Mr. Bradicich said the Mayor has asked us to close the discussion as the Village Board has what they need to proceed. Ms. Reed spoke about resources available and that we should revisit topic when the CAC has less on our plate, possibly next year. Discussion on native vs invasive plants, detractor plants and contributor plants to the ecosystem.

7. DEC Community Forest Management Plan Implementation – Mr. Bradicich said no new updates, grant is waiting for state approval, Diane Eastwick is our Village Board liaison for when we need to expend funds. Need to discuss RFP with Ms. Moree and have it ready in a month. Ms. Reed spoke about the good feedback she received from groups interested in planting and maintenance. Cornell Cooperative Extension is interested in training portion of grant.

8. Member items – Mr. Bradicich has created a Google drive to share CAC documents. Discussion on floating solar proposal.

9. Discussion on changing date for October meeting. Next meeting will be October 23rd.

Ms. Reed talked about potential help with RFPs from Albany's Forester.

Mr. Braine talked about Sam Merritt's proposal for Tides and Trades project at Scenic Hudson property. It would be an estuary education center and boat building school. Mr. Bradicich offered to meet with Mr. Merritt. Discussion on Downtown Revitalization Initiative, NY Forward grants and Scenic Hudson property. Mr. Brunner asked about the status of Athens Riverine Museum proposal. Mr. Bradicich will reach out to Dr. Lipsman for information on the project.

Ms. Reed asked about street trees on Brick Row and other grant opportunities for fixing lighting and sidewalks.

Minutes were approved for the August meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.