

Athens Conservation Advisory Council meeting minutes

January 22, 2026

Via Zoom

Members present: Bradicich, Moree, Reed, Brunner, Braine

Members absent: Sprague

Meeting guests present: Alyssa Bement, NYS DOH

Chairman Bradicich convened the meeting at 6:35pm.

Approval of December meeting minutes – Ms. Moree motioned, Mr. Braine seconded, all in favor

Drinking Water Source Protection Project – Rack cards distributed to village office, town office and library. Ms. Bement asked about the timeline for sending out resident mailers for the Hollister lake watershed. Proposed sending out materials in the spring or summer and will provide an update at the March or April CAC meeting. Discussion on address list for mailers, Ms. Bement will resend to Mr. Bradicich. After looking into NY EFC septic replacement fund there is only one eligible property in the watershed so that information will not be added to the mailers. The upcoming Coxsackie planning board meeting on February 5th was discussed. There will be about a half hour presentation on updates to laws for the watershed. Calendar invites will be sent to CAC members for both meetings in February.

Disaster Preparedness Education project – Both website and social media are completed

Habitat Mapping Proposal update – Draft contract discussion, Mr. Bradicich asked the group to finish reviewing it in the next few days and respond back with any possible changes.

New Business – There will be another meeting with Scenic Hudson and Sam Merrett at the North Washington Street property on January 26th. The date may be changed due to weather. Mr. Braine asked to be included on email for meeting dates. Mr. Bradicich asked the group for suggestions on new members to the CAC.

Tree Grant RFP – Ms. Reed would like to spend more time on the RFP, suggested unit pricing on tree removal and possibly for pruning as it was recommended to her to get better pricing. Discussion on updated tree inventory and updates to the management plan. Ms. Moree asked if the management plan was going to be updated as part of the education section of the tree grant. Ms. Reed suggested that the management plan is written by the village and not arborists so it contains our goals/vision for the trees. Ms. Moree discussed updating the management plan along with the RFP but not spending a lot of time on it as this is the time of year that companies are answering RFPs to book their schedule. Ms. Reed expressed concerns with not being too vague in the RFP language to make sure to cover any issues with contractors. Discussion on DEC contract and to make sure what is in the RFP matches that contract. There are concerns over who will manage the contractors, discussion on a project manager, possibly an arborist that could answer specific questions on trees from the contractors. The DPW may end up being the contact for contractor questions. Ms. Reed was concerned that there are situations like extensive pruning that require someone with the expertise to make those decisions. Mr. Bradicich will talk to the mayor about it but he believes this should not hold up getting the RFP out.

Mr. Bradicich and Ms. Reed will work on the RFP language over the next week. Mr. Bradicich mentioned edits he had made to the RFP and continued discussion with Ms. Reed on RFP content. The plan now is have a group update in a week on Zoom or Google Meet. Mr. Bradicich is hopeful to have the RFP ready in a week to send to the mayor and the village attorney. Ms. Reed would like to share draft RFP with contact at NY DEC for possible input. Mr. Braine asked if the DPW was going to be the arborist that the contractors would consult with and was concerned if they have the expertise to answer technical questions on trees. Mr. Bradicich will talk to the mayor to see if we have a village arborist on call. The belief was that we no longer have one and could possibly reach out to other communities in the area to see if their arborist would be interested in helping us. Discussion on being able to pay for an arborist from the grant funds, possibly from the education section. Ms. Moree mentioned that one part of the grant was for an individual in the DPW to develop skills in being an arborist or at least do some of the work when the project is finished. Ms. Reed said this was something talked about with the previous head of the DPW early in the grant writing process.

Member Items – Mr. Brunner brought up discussion at the last Village Board meeting on the DPW desire to take down trees that were previously marked for removal. There was a question if the cost would be covered by the grant. Mr. Bradicich will talk to the mayor on the issue. Mr. Brunner also talked about the curb replacement project on North Montgomery St. Mr. Sprague talked about possibly removing all of the trees on the east side of the street to be able to use a curb forming machine like the one used recently on Brick Row. The Village Board held off on making any decision until a future meeting. Mr. Brunner felt the CAC should be aware of what could happen with the trees on that street.

Group discussion on curbs and drainage issues in the village. Discussion about bluestone curbs that were removed and decision to remove them. Mr. Braine asked about saving trees that are being taken down for alternate use that could benefit the whole village. Ms. Reed believed there was only a provision for chipping of trees in the community forest management plan but it could have been changed to include other uses. We should look into it and maybe adjust language for tree removal part of RFP. Mr. Braine talked about communal firewood distribution for people in need. Ms. Reed looked briefly at the management plan and it says wood from tree removals should be disposed of in a manner that is least burdensome to municipal officials charged with removals.

Motion to end the meeting made by Ms. Reed, seconded by Ms. Moree, meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.