

## Athens Conservation Advisory Council meeting minutes

June 18, 2026

Via Zoom

Members present: Bradicich, Reed, Brunner, Braine

Members absent: Sprague, Moree

Meeting guests present: Christine Vanderlan (NY DEC)

Chairman Bradicich convened the meeting at 6:35pm.

Habitat Mapping – Discussion on steering committee and if CAC would take on that role. Mr. Bradicich recommended that this group should be the steering committee and the next step should be to reach out to the Hudsonia biologists. Ms. Reed was asked if she is still going to spearhead this project and she is still planning to do so. Mr. Bradicich asked Ms. Vanderlan about the report due next month and she explained what had to be submitted. If there were no expenses or reimbursements for April, May and June then just a Word document with a set of questions needs to be filled out and signed. Discussion on contract with Hudsonia and when that was signed, Mr. Bradicich believed it was in February. Ms. Vanderlan discussed staff changes at Hudsonia. Kristi MacDonald is now handling project related items. Mr. Bradicich asked about a final work plan and Ms. Vanderlan said it should be in our contract. After a discussion it was found in Attachment C. Ms. Reed asked about getting a copy and Mr. Bradicich said it would be in the CAC Google drive. Mr. Bradicich will speak with Hudsonia before the end of June to have information for Ms. Vanderlan in the July update.

Ms. Vanderlan left the meeting and Mr. Bradicich then shared his screen to show the work plan. The work plan calls for forming a steering committee so the CAC will become the steering committee to call the issue closed. Discussion of next steps, first of which is habitat mapping reporting. The plan is to ask for a preliminary habitat map, get a sense of how long that is going to take and what we need to do to help them. Mr. Braine asked about what areas in the village are going to be mapped. Ms. Reed explained that it is the entire village plus the area surrounding Hollister lake. Mr. Braine hoped the two large properties near Brick Row would be mapped as there is the rare Heart-leaved plantain that was found near there. Ms. Reed will review the work plan and then reach out to Hudsonia. Mr. Bradicich asked that the whole team be notified if there is going to be a call with them, he would like to be on the call. Mr. Bradicich will make sure at least the draft contract is on the Google drive and add the actual contract later.

Drinking Water Source Protection Project – Mr. Bradicich will reach out to Ms. Moree on the number of bad addresses from the mailers that were returned as not deliverable. The village attorney, Tal Rappleyea, sent all of the local laws written up officially. Discussion on next town board meetings where local laws will be presented and then there will be public hearings a month later. The county planning board meetings will be after that and Tal will manage that process.

Tree Grant – Mr. Bradicich informed the group that we will need to have a meeting next week to review any bids, so far there is only one. Discussion on topic and lack of bids. There were concerns of a tight labor market and companies already having a lot of other business in progress. Mr. Braine believed we need to reach out to tree companies and do some cold calling as well as direct them to the posting of the project on the village website. After further discussion the plan is to meet in person at the village office on Monday at 6pm. Mr. Brunner asked about Greene Bee Greenhouse, the company that

the CAC went to visit at the start of this process. Ms. Reed will email them to see if they are interested in the project, she believed they were not ISA certified so they would not be eligible for some items. Mr. Braine again discussed cold calling companies and volunteered to do that if we extend the bidding deadline. Mr. Brunner suggested posting about it on the Facebook community boards in the area. After some discussion Mr. Bradicich suggested we discuss it at the meeting on Monday.

Mr. Bradicich discussed a request from Becky at the Athens Cultural Center about a request to remove a tree on Second street that is dying back and shared a picture with the group. Discussion on the next steps and what type of tree it is, Ms. Reed said if it is a Norway maple it should already be on the list for removal. Mr. Braine suggested we look at it in person and discuss it at the meeting on Monday. Mr. Brunner asked if they should have a choice on what tree to replace it with. Discussion on tree replacement and that there should be a list of options homeowners can choose from, maybe three choices. Mr. Brunner said he wouldn't want something that may branch out low and block the Athens Cultural Center sign but Ms. Reed said the tree could be limbed up. Some further discussion before Ms. Reed said she would look at it tomorrow. Mr. Bradicich mentioned Nancy Poylo's tree that is on the list, asked if the group has looked at it, may need a broken branch removed and some pruning. Group discussion on what type of tree it is and after looking at a picture it is not a Norway maple but there may be some structural damage. Ms. Reed will go look at it but she feels a little bit uncomfortable making a call like this. She mentioned that if she was doing tree risk assessment at work, even though it is a healthy tree it would be considered a hazardous tree with that kind of damage. The tree could damage Ms. Poylo's home or someone in the street and Ms. Reed expressed again that she is uncomfortable with making that decision as a committee member. Mr. Bradicich said we can leave it until we get an arborist to come and take a look at it. Mr. Braine mentioned how long it takes for a tree to get that big and how much shade it puts out. Ms. Reed said there is structural damage in the interior and it is more likely to come down in a high wind event or ice storm. Some further discussion and discussion of tree inventory removal list, the previous arborist listed it as a Norway maple so it will need further investigation.

Complete Streets – Mr. Bradicich asked the group if we had time to look it over. Mr. Braine talked about the differences in elevation of sidewalks, mentioned that he could use a laser level and find divots that exceed  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch on the sidewalks by his home on Brick Row. Ms. Reed mentioned that asphalt is not allowed for sidewalks per code, asked if that will be addressed. Mr. Bradicich said you are still responsible for it's maintenance as a village resident. Mr. Braine was concerned that Complete Streets focuses on the aesthetics and look of vintage bluestone but even if you used the modern bluestone the costs could be as high as \$10,000 to replace the sidewalk in front your house. Mr. Bradicich said this is just step one that gets us points in Climate Smart Communities and helps us get grants. The expectation is to not pass this and then go after someone with a sidewalk issue but to give us some backbone to go after grants to enable people to fix things. Mr. Braine talked about people's concerns with more regulations and how people on his street reacted to previous work the village did on the alley there. Mr. Bradicich said he went through our list of concerns from the previous meeting and tried to look at it from the standpoint of what the public would be concerned about. Discussed the costs involved like paying for a permit to fix your own sidewalk as well as replacing the base material to a new standard of four inches and that added expense. Mr. Bradicich said he did make changes to the section on village responsibility for repairing damage to a sidewalk from a village tree. Discussion of possible concerns from DPW having to do those repairs. Mr. Bradicich asked if he should send this to the village. Mr. Braine gave his thoughts on the positives about getting grants to help homeowners take care of repairs. Mr. Brunner asked if this proposal can be sent to Tal first to review the language on ADA compliant sidewalks. Mr. Bradicich said that was a good idea and that will be his next step before

passing it on to the village board for review. Mr. Bradicich discussed plan implementation timeline and how it impacts the waterfront grants. Mr. Brunner asked if language was going to be added to designate important areas like the sidewalks up to the library and community center. Mr. Bradicich said it was added but for some reason was not in one version, the one on the Google drive should be correct. After further discussion it was determined that the waterfront was the only designated important area. Ms. Reed thought it would be a good idea to add back in the language for the sidewalks up to the school. She said there was no busing in the village and the children have to be able to walk to the school. Mr. Brunner talked about an email where he said the north side of Second street up to Vernon and over to the school as that side doesn't have any telephone poles in the sidewalk. Mr. Bradicich updated the document with that priority zone.

Community Day – Mr. Bradicich thanked everyone that helped out with our booth, apologized for not being able to help out due to schedule conflict.

Climate Smart Communities – Mr. Bradicich would like each member to take on a project to research for next month. Mr. Bradicich and Mr. Brunner would continue with Complete Streets and Ms. Reed and Mr. Braine would continue work on Habitat Mapping. Mr. Brunner said he looked into the Riparian Buffers project and had prepared something for the last meeting but we did not have time to talk about it. He offered to post it to the Google drive for the rest of the CAC to look at. Discussion on where to find information on the projects and requirements for points. Mr. Bradicich said members can choose other projects on the website if they might be a better fit. Ms. Reed talked about a grant available for the Water Smart Landscaping project.

April Meeting Minutes – Ms. Reed made a motion to accept the minutes and Mr. Braine seconded, all in favor.

Motion to end the meeting made by Ms. Reed, seconded by Mr. Braine, all in favor, meeting adjourned at 7:40pm.