

Waterfront Advisory Board
October 23, 2023 -7:00 p.m.

Present:

Margaret Phelan, Chairperson
Chet Allen
Eli Schloss
Carol Tomassetti
Marion Zimmer
Lynn Corcoran Johnston
Vincent Coq (7:15 p.m.)

TB Liaison, Kathie Quick
PB Liaison Chris Marta

Excused:

Tim Triscari

Guest: Elaine Jaffe, Treasurer of Esopus Library

Meeting commenced by Chairperson Phelan at 7:00 p.m.

Heather Blaikie, Scenic Hudson Senior Planner – Planner Blaikie provided update to the Board relative to the Black Creek Preserve trail upgrades. A request would be made for a Certificate of Occupancy for the completed pavilion. August 2023, the plan was before the Esopus Planning Board which revised the Winding Brook Road. There had been severe flooding which resulted in the need for a bridge renovation. When the Certificate of Occupancy was issued, the trail would be reopened in the Spring with a ribbon cutting ceremony. The WAB members would be contacted for the ribbon cutting ceremony invitation.

Carol Tomassetti inquired about kayak launching and feasibility. Sleightsburg Spit, Freer Park and Lighthouse Park had waterfront access but needed development to promote waterfront uses. Lighthouse Park had artwork that needed to be addressed in the LWRP. Planner Blaikie stated that the old boat ramp remained but another funding round with Greenway was needed. Launching at the Winding Brook Trail would be challenging given the tidal access, low tide and access. The existing 12' wide road didn't lend itself to viable vehicle access without extensive renovations.

John Burroughs Black Creek Trail – A grant had been awarded but Covid ensued and achieving the three segments required needed to be addressed. Actions were still being taken that were required to enter into a contract with the State. Improvements to the John Burroughs Sanctuary needed improvements to the parking. Services of a local Scout were engaged to create a kiosk with a trail map and appropriate wayfinding.

Scenic Area of Statewide Significance – Hudson Hideaway - The Planning Board's Planner had inquired if the Waterfront Advisory Board wished to comment on the SASS. The Members felt that it had weighed in relative to the project in relation to the LWRP and there was not a need to issue further comment. The WAB had previously provided written comment stating the developer should visit the website for guidance, but the project was not visible from the river. The Secretary was requested to provide a copy of the letter that had been issued in response to the LWRP referral. The Applicant had requested a written response. Chairperson Phelan would draft a letter in response to the request for the Members to review prior to circulating to the Planning Board, Planner and Applicant.

Chester Update – Carol Tomassetti provided report annexed hereto. She stated that it had been a successful year with good volunteers and had only cut South by Esopus Meadows and had been the second year the cutting by Freer Park had not occurred. They stopped cutting earlier this year than any other years since 2012. Given the season had been so warm, the weeds had started to break up and cutting had ceased July 29th and didn't take place after the plants go to seed. A record number of weeds had been cut this year and had a wonderful volunteer staff. The program had commenced later in the season but seeds that had sprouted had not taken route. Anecdotally, the plants do not do well in silt and leaves sprouting didn't take root in the South.

She had noted extensive duck weed floats this past year. There had been minor mechanical issues with Chester which had been repaired quickly.

Monitoring of submerged aquatic vegetation took place in collaboration with the Carey Institute. Two years ago, Vallisneria had been identified but not being seen presently. Suggestion had been made to work with Marist to plant plugs to promote the growth.

Member Tomassetti suggested community outreach (especially with marinas) was recommended to educate the public relative the waterchestnuts and cutting. Additionally, there were thousands of waterchestnut seeds floating in the river but weren't believed to be viable. The recent high tides may have been the cause.

LWRP Update – Nicole Allen with LaBerge Group, Director of Planning Development (present remotely) – provided an explanation of the update. A project status form had been provided for review by the Members. An extension was being requested by the Town to October 2025. Nicole Allen suggested that items requiring further review pursuant to request from the New York State of Department of State be reviewed by her Agency and then discuss with the WAB in the future. The goal was to get a new draft prepared to return to the State by the end of 2024.

Carol Tomassetti suggested breaking down items to consider into workable sections. Nicole Allen recommended that multiple meetings or communications could be organized to distribute sections and comments via emails. Margaret Phelan stated that to proceed, Nicole Allen would create a schedule for the WAB members to consider and manage the Board's schedule and discussion topics.

Nicole would start with schedule working back from October 2024 and devise a plan to digest the items and finalize the draft by January 2025.

Minutes: None

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,

Lisa K. Mance, Secretary
Dated: October 23, 2024
Approved: February 26, 2025