

RESOLUTION APPROVING TOWN OF LANSING CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

RESOLUTION 22-

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The following Resolution was duly presented for consideration by the Town Board:

WHEREAS, per Town Board Resolution 19-49 the Conservation Advisory Council was authorized to perform certain functions for the Town and to act in an advisory capacity under General Municipal Law § 239-x; and

WHEREAS, the aforementioned Resolution and General Municipal Law 239-x(f) require the Conservation Advisory Council to file required annual reports with the Town Board on or before the thirty-first day of December of each and every year, and once approved by the Town Board, to send a copy thereof to the New York State Commissioner of Environmental Conservation; and

Membership

Members of the Conservation Advisory Council (hereafter “CAC”) are appointed by the Lansing Town Board each December via resolution. The following members served in 2022:

Andra Benson, liaison to Town Board
Robyn Bailey
Tom Butler, informal liaison to Planning Board
Edward Dubovi
Karen Edelstein
John Fleming
Carrie Koplinka-Loehr
Evan Ogata
Todd Walter
David Wolfe

Carrie Koplinka-Loehr and Tom Butler agreed to continue to co-chair the CAC in 2022.

Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway Overlay District

The CAC created maps and proposed language for an overlay district that would guide planning along NY Route 34B and East Shore Drive, from the northern to the southern boundaries of the town. The goal of the district is to maintain lake and pastoral views and encourage any commercial development in specific areas. On January 10, 2022 the CAC presented the overlay district to the Planning Board, which requested additional maps. The CAC created those maps and added photographs of scenic views, then presented the overlay district to the Planning Board in May, 2022.

Conservation Easements

Members began working on conservation easement criteria list in 2021 and furthered this work in 2022. We now have a document that is one tool for rating the suitability of parcels for potential conservation easements in the town.

In September, 2022, the CAC reviewed maps and background information about a parcel of land off NYS Route 34B along Salmon Creek below the new bridge construction. We discussed the benefits and drawbacks for the town and then recommended purchase of the parcel to the Town Board.

Climate Act Draft Scoping Plan

In April 2022 a subset of the CAC joined with members of Lansing's Committee on a Power Plant Future to review and comment on the Climate Act Draft Scoping Plan. We submitted our assessment to Lansing's Director of Planning in April.

Lansing Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan

The CAC reviewed Lansing's Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan in the spring of 2022. We submitted comments to the Director of Parks and Recreation focused on promoting low-carbon transportation, rethinking rest rooms, and funding for green spaces.

Environmental Management Council

The CAC recommended to the Town Board that CAC member David Wolfe be appointed as liaison to the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council and David began serving in this role in 2022.

Open Space Index

In the winter of 2022 the Town was awarded a grant from the Park Foundation to create an Open Space Index. The Town Board appropriated \$5,000 toward this effort in 2021 (and again in 2023) and released a Request for Qualifications for an Open Space Index and Conservation Plan on January 20, 2022.

We received six responses from prominent environmental consulting firms in New York State, which our Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) reviewed and ranked. Each contained a scope of work and cost estimate. The CAC interviewed four firms on April 7, 2022 and recommended to the Town Board that Bergmann Associates, Architects, Engineers, Landscape Architects & Surveyors, D.P.C. be selected for the project because of their solid experience with open space indices, upstate communities, and conservation councils.

After a professional services agreement was signed, we began meeting with two professionals from Bergmann Associates to refine a Scope of Work, deliverables, and target completion dates. Lansing's Director of Planning provided Bergmann Associates with the Town's Natural Resources Inventory and Scenic Resource Appendix, the Tompkins County Conservation Strategy, maps, the list of Unique Natural Areas, and other materials to help them identify significant natural resource areas for open space preservation within the Town. The intersection of these significant resource areas is a starting point for identifying areas of preservation to be illustrated on an Open Space Preservation map.

In September 2022, Bergmann Associates, with input from the Conservation Advisory Council, designed a survey intended to draw out opinions on open space in Lansing. It is available on paper and online (<https://tinyurl.com/LansingOSISurvey>). The online version

includes an interactive map that allows respondents to identify specific areas of the Town that are worthy of conservation. The deadline for public feedback was 11-30-22.

To engage the public in the Open Space process, the CAC has, in conjunction with Bergmann Associates:

Hosted a booth at the Lansing Carnival on September 24, 2022, where 30 visitors identified areas on a map that they felt were worthy of conservation (see photo attached);

Printed a color vinyl outdoor banner identifying the Conservation Advisory Council (attached);

Printed flyers describing the open space survey (attached) and distributed these at the carnival;

Interviewed a farmer, community leader, business owner, and environmentalist to obtain their views on open space preservation;

Printed 7,900 postcards announcing the survey and a public meeting, and mailed these to 6,188 residents in Lansing using voter registration lists. The remaining postcards were distributed to more than two dozen locations in the Town, including places of worship, apartments, schools, the library, YMCA, restaurants, gas stations, businesses, and town and village offices’

Painted and erected a billboard on Route 34 near the entrance to the Town that advertises the survey;

Sent press releases about the project, the survey, and the public meeting to news outlets in Tompkins County (e.g., Ithaca Journal, Tompkins Weekly) and also to local listservs (e.g., Lansing Discussion; Dart Drive; Lansing Central School District, Parent-Teacher-Staff Organization).

Hosted a public meeting on November 15, 2022, to explain this project and gather additional input from Lansing residents.

Hosted “office hours with Lansing’s Director of Planning” on November 16, 2022, to explain this project via Zoom and answer questions.

So far, the Town has received 439 survey responses. Public comments will be summarized and presented to the Town Board to prioritize the issues that will be addressed in the Open Space Index.

Comments provided on drafts and plans

At the request of the Director of Planning for the Town, the CAC reviewed and commented on draft text and map of an Agriculture Zoning District in June 2022.

The CAC was also asked to comment on the initial plan for the proposed Dandy Mart (at Rte 34 and 34B) and we sent our comments to Lansing’s Planning Board in June 2022.

Presentations by the CAC

January 10, 2022, presentation to the Lansing Planning Board via Zoom on the CAC’s Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway Overlay District (Todd Walter).

May 2022, presentation to the Lansing Planning Board on revisions and improvements to the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway Overlay District (Todd Walter).

November 15, 2022, presentation with environmental consultant Bergmann Associates, to the public about the CAC, Open Space Index, and (preliminary) survey results. Twenty-one people attended.

Presentations to the CAC

Pat Tyrell, Director of Parks and Recreation, explained the Lansing Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan at our May 5, 2022 meeting.

Andrew Zepp, director of the Finger Lakes Land Trust, gave CAC members a walking tour of Bell Station on June 14, 2022.

Pat Tyrell, Director of Parks and Recreation, explained the possible value to the Town of the parcel below the NYS Route 34B bridge over Salmon Creek at our September 3, 2022 meeting.

Town of Lansing Support

C.J. Randall, Director of Planning for the Town of Lansing, continues to advise the CAC and Heather Dries provides administrative support. This assistance is critical as CAC members develop and implement activities.

Trainings

CAC members are poised to complete their annual training in a) recognizing sexual harassment and b) reducing workplace violence.

Work Plan

The CAC continued to update its work plan. The co-chairs and members use this document to guide future actions and gauge progress.

WHEREAS, upon due deliberation thereupon, the Town Board of the Town of Lansing has hereby:

RESOLVED, the Town Board of the Town of Lansing has received and accepted the Town of Lansing Conservation Advisory Council 2022 Annual Report.