

**RESOLUTION APPROVING TOWN OF LANSING CONSERVATION
ADVISORY COUNCIL 2023 ANNUAL REPORT**

RESOLUTION 23

**RESOLUTION APPROVING THE TOWN OF LANSING
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL 2023 ANNUAL REPORT**

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

**Town of Lansing
Conservation Advisory Council
2023 Annual Report**

Membership

Members of the Conservation Advisory Council (hereafter “CAC”) are appointed by the Lansing Town Board each January via resolution. The following members served in 2023:

Robyn Bailey
Adam Buck
Gabrielle Desnoes
Edward Dubovi
Karen Edelstein
John Fleming
Ruth Groff, liaison to Town Board
Carrie Koplinka-Loehr
Todd Walter
David Wolfe

Edward Dubovi and Carrie Koplinka-Loehr agreed to co-chair the CAC throughout 2023.

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. David began serving in this role in 2022 and continued throughout 2023.

NYSACC Conference on the Environment 2023

The New York State Association of Conservation Commissions (NYSACC), in collaboration with Tompkins County's Environmental Management Council, hosted a hybrid annual Conference on the Environment September 20-22 in Ithaca. CAC and EMC members from around the state participated (<https://www.nysacc.net>). Lansing's CAC members helped with the early framing of the conference and arranged several speakers. Two CAC members presented at the conference and the CAC attended a variety of sessions on water quality, policy, land conservation, and other topics.

Open Space Conservation Plan

Throughout 2023 we met monthly with our consultants from Colliers Engineering (formerly Bergmann Associates) to create Lansing's Open Space Conservation Plan, formerly known as the Open Space Index. For public feedback, our team received an astonishing 425 responses to the online and paper survey, then analyzed these and the "votes" that were placed on sites as worthy of conserving. Along with these responses, thirty photographs were submitted, which were used, with permission, in the draft plan. The consultants also interviewed local heads of NGOs and local officials.

Public input revealed hopes that we would maintain the thriving agrarian character of the Town; conserve its scenic beauty; build local resiliency to climate change; enhance resident quality of life through scenic and recreational resources; ensure the long-term sustainability of our air, water, and land; and enhance wildlife habitat.

We amassed and integrated databases from town, county, state, and federal sources (parcels, steep slopes, soils, flood zones, wetlands, forests, Unique Natural Areas, and other natural resources). In particular, information from the Town's Natural Resources Inventory and Scenic Resource Appendix, the Tompkins County Conservation Strategy, maps, and the list of Unique Natural Areas helped us to identify significant natural resource areas for conservation. We formed a subcommittee to establish the criteria for ranking Lansing's parcels, then created a priority grid for the following criteria:

- Agriculture + Farmlands
- Forest + Woodlots
- Wetlands
- Floodplains
- Stream Corridors
- Cayuga Lakefront
- Significant Wildlife Habitat
- Grasslands + Meadows
- Steep Slopes
- Unique Natural Areas
- Vulnerability to Development

We assessed Lansing's large parcels for these criteria, then ranked them from high to low for their suitability for being conserved. Of the 109 Lansing parcels greater than 70 acres, 17 ranked highest for conservation value; 31 ranked medium-high; 49 ranked medium-low; and 22 ranked lowest. Landowners and planners in the town can use this information as parcels voluntarily become available in the future.

An online story map draft of the Open Space Conservation Plan can be found at: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/a5d16e7abd004ba5966a98e7145b3f92>

Other Projects

The CAC reviewed changes to the Town's Agriculture (AG) and Rural Agriculture (RA) zones, and CAC members attended the public meeting about the proposed modifications.

CAC members reviewed and responded to Lansing's Code Revision Committee's Amendment regarding appointments to town committees.

We sought clarity from local, regional, and state counsel on whether CACs are subject to Open Meeting Laws.

Publications

FAQ: "Your questions answered about Lansing's open space,"

https://www.lansingtown.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/conservation_advisory_council/page/2495/osi_faq_3-4-23.pdf

Lansing Open Space Conservation Plan,

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/a5d16e7abd004ba5966a98e7145b3f92>

Presentations by the CAC

May 2, 2023, meeting with Lansing's Agriculture and Farmland Protection Committee to introduce the Open Space Conservation Plan (Edward Dubovi, Ruth Groff, Carrie Koplinka-Loehr)

May 11, 2023, meeting with the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council, Stewart Park, Ithaca. Joined other Conservation Advisory Councils from the area to report on activities and help plan the NYSACC conference (Edward Dubovi, Carrie Koplinka-Loehr)

October 23, 2023, presentation to the Planning Board about the Open Space Conservation Plan (Edward Dubovi, Carrie Koplinka-Loehr)

November 9, 2023, public presentation about the Open Space Conservation Plan by CAC members, John Zepko, and our consultants from Colliers Engineering (Bergmann Associates). We advertised the meeting via posters, post cards, notices in local papers, the town's electronic outdoor sign, and announcements on listservs. About twenty-four people attended and provided comments.

November 27, second meeting with the Planning Board to answer questions about the Open Space Conservation Plan (Edward Dubovi, Karen Edelstein, Carrie Koplinka-Loehr)

December 7, second meeting with Lansing’s Agriculture and Farmland Protection Committee to answer questions about the Open Space Conservation Plan (Carrie Koplinka-Loehr)

Presentations to the CAC

June 1, 2023, Agnes Emmanuelle Guillo, Community Educator at Cornell Cooperative Extension, gave a presentation on Non-Pipes Alternatives for Lansing.

July 6, 2023, Ruth Hopkins of the Lansing Trails Committee, reviewed previous planning efforts, showed proposed trail maps, and identified future needs for the planning process, while seeking feedback on projected routes for Lansing Trails.

July 6, 2023, chair of the Conservation Advisory Board for the town of Dryden, Gian Dodici, spoke with our CAC about the CAB’s relationship to its Town Board and progress they have made.

Tours

Walnut Ridge Dairy, November 2, 2023, hosted by John Fleming

Town of Lansing Support

John Zepko, Director of Planning for the Town of Lansing, met half a dozen times with CAC co-chairs in 2023 to discuss the OSCP, the budget for the CAC, and related issues. The Planning Department and the Town also provided some administrative support, including posting information to the website (<https://www.lansingtown.com/bc-cac>). This assistance is critical as CAC members develop and implement activities.

Trainings

CAC members completed their annual training at the end of December, 2022, on the topics of recognizing sexual harassment and 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 2023 Annual Report.

The question of the adoption of such proposed Resolution was duly motioned by Councilperson _____, duly seconded by Councilperson _____, and put to a roll call vote with the following results:

Councilperson Andra Benson –
Councilperson Bronwyn Losey –
Supervisor Edward LaVigne –

Councilperson Ruth Groff –
Councilperson Joseph Wetmore –

Accordingly, the foregoing Resolution was approved, carried, and duly adopted on December 20, 2023.