

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE TOWN OF LANSING CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

RESOLUTION 26-

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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

Town of Lansing Conservation Advisory Council 2025 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 2025:

Robyn Bailey
Edward Dubovi (chair)
John Fleming
Todd Walter
Brian Boerman
Lisa Scanlon
Travis Kitch
John Hatfield

Two new members joined the CAC in 2025 – Travis Kitch and John Hatfield. Attempts to recruit a student were unsuccessful.

Activities for 2025

Limited progress was made in 2025. The first two meetings of 2025 were devoted to a request for a resolution concerning the renewal permit for Cargill and an amendment to allow storage of water in an abandoned section of mine. John Dennis gave a presentation on the environmental aspects of the Cargill request. A resolution was forwarded to the Town Board requesting more oversight by the DEC.

In April, a presentation was given by Jon Negley, District Manager, Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District. As noted, the mission of the Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is to provide assistance to citizens and units of local

government in making sound decisions on the management of soil, water and related natural resources based on their needs. Key function of the SWCD is assisting with developing and coordinating grant applications from multiple sources. Assistance to the Town of Lansing has included ditch management with the installation of “fleximats” to reduce erosion, culvert outlet stabilization installations, stormwater ponds to reduce water flow, and stream realignment in the Salmon Creek watershed. Note was made concerning the erosion issues at the site of the Lansing Rod and Gun Club. A recent report indicates progress is being made on this complex issue.

In May, the CAC had a presentation by Rebecca Schneider, Associate Professor, Natural Resources and the Environment at Cornell. She discussed various aspects of watershed and sustainable resource management. Issues associated with “ditch” management by local DOT units as they related to storm water erosion were noted. A possible associated with agriculture land field drains and lower water tables was discussed.

A considerable amount of time was spent this year trying to make progress on implementing the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program for the Town of Lansing. With the help of Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), some steps were taken to outline an approach that the CAC could take. A task force was created to try to move forward on the CSC. Two events somewhat hindered progress – a task force member resigned due to relocation and CCE lost the contract for the CSC program. The CSC contract now resides with the Southern Tier 8 Regional Board with our contact being Ashley Seyfried. Ashley attended a CAC meeting in October, and her charge was to see what had been done previously and to try and outline steps that could be taken in the future.

The Town Board had opened a discussion on whether the CAC should be designated a Conservation Board (CB). CB’s are given the responsibility to assess the environmental impact of certain developments particularly as they pertain to property listed in the Open Space Conservation Plan. Concern was raised as to the need for administrative support for the CB especially from the Planning Department. A meeting was held with the Town of Ithaca CB to gain insight into how they operate. A senior planner attends their meetings and provides administrative support for the CB. All plans for a qualified development were provided to the CB for review. If necessary, a site visit was arranged to assess the conservation issues in question. Final reports were prepared by the Planning Dept. Clearly, a CB cannot function without administrative support.

Future CAC efforts

Future efforts of the CAC will be in need of two items:

- 1) Some directions by the Town Board as to issues that they deem of value in exploring and.
 - The CAC serves at the pleasure of the Town Board and should not embark on projects not sanctioned by the Board. The CAC is charged to “conduct researches into the land area of the Town of Lansing”. Where and for what purpose?? There should be some consensus of the Board as to what tasks should be pursued by the CAC.
- 2) Administrative support
 - Virtually no progress can be made with the CSC program without admin support. The 2025 CAC had 8 members, 7 of whom had full-time jobs. Even if the CAC

could access town records, the time element for most CAC members is prohibitive. A “task force” approach with few CAC members may be the most productive approach if other elements are in place.

Without direction from the Town Board on relevant topics and without administrative resources to accomplish identified tasks, monthly meetings of the CAC may not be necessary. If specific areas of interest are identified, then the “task force” model may be the most effective way to make progress. The CAC would then meet only to review and approve the achievement of the task force.