

Clarence Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Agenda November 14, 2024

@Town Place

7:01PM Call to order and Introduction (Steve)

Attending: Barbara Maisch, Charles Biegner, Lori Sauls, Dennis Londos, Steve Diver, Bob Geiger, Bob Altieri, Paul Shear.

Corrections to the October minutes? (see email). None. Vote to accept them. __Yes X__
Visitors? None.

Volunteer to take the minutes? _Steve_

Corrections to the October minutes? (see email). Vote to accept them. __Yes X__

Updates

- Councilman Bob Altieri—Expenses from the haunted headlamp hike have been processed in the Town and reimbursements will be sent soon.
- Councilman Paul Shear—None.
- Former Councilman Bob Geiger—Noted that filming at the Nature Center is complete. The property was well taken care of during the shoot. He passed out some lanyards from the film director.
- Deer control (Dennis). Deer problems are worse than ever; lots of reports. Deer control program is underway. Deer keep getting displaced from new subdivision developments. No deer census by DEC, and the deer control program aims for 150-200 per year.
- 2024 Budget Update (Lori)
 - With the recent expenses for the educational supplies for the headlamp hike, cider purchase and sweatshirts for Council members, we are -28.60, or slightly overdrawn for 2024.
 - The proposed budget for 2025 submitted to Town Council was approved for \$2500.
- Grant for Mill Pond survey (at Main Street Town Park) (Casey, Steve)
 - Casey to present at Planning Board Meeting in December
- Haunted Headlamp Hike (Steve)
 - Evan Vahratian (FSC) planned it, and >300 people! Not all registered.
 - Conservation tables were awesome! Great job Cheryl and Council for organizing these. Could use trail system more extensively next time.
 - Parking was in the composting area. No cars were allowed in the parking area. Two groups tabled outside under canopies. Makes these events scaleable.
 - A campfire was approved, but we did not do it due to windy conditions.
 - Could use the Nature Center parking area as outdoor space for future events.
 - Coming in January: Headlamp Hike. We expect high attendance and parking problems. The Nature Center parking area did not anticipate such large community events.
- Tree series in the Bee
 - Great inaugural series; Thanks Ron and Barbara! Lots of positive feedback from citizens and useful information. They made 14 contributions!
 - Upcoming contributions on native plants and perennials, wildlife and tree benefits
- Winterfest-Conservation Table Jan 25th (Sat) 11am-1pm. We did a table last year and have lots of children and families passing through. Need a couple council members to help staff the table. It was fun last year!
- Transcendental writing at Nature Center May 17th. FSC and Clarence Schools are organizing a literacy project directed to K-2 children. On Sat April 5, there will be an event at Town Park, and in May, the high school students leading this program with

Mary Sorrels advising them, will lead transcendental writing and writing in nature as part of the program. We will partner and assist on the trails at the May event.

Old Business

- Arbor Day Open House Planning (Steve, Barbara)
 - Saturday April 26th, 2025. From 10am to 12pm.
 - First presenter: Dave O'Donnell (Eastern Monarch Butterfly Farm)
 - Second presenter: Claire Sweeney (Wild Spirit Education). Thanks to Barbara for suggesting and contacting these speakers.
 - Guided hike and tree identification by a Forester (DEC or Erie Co.)
 - Tree giveaway (50 seedlings this year, not 100)
 - Tabling-what groups to invite? Discussion considered whether it should be opened up to naturalist vendors, and it was decided to keep this strictly educational and non-commercial. So no vendors will be invited. Focusing on Buffalo Waterkeepers, Clarence Youth Bureau, WNY Bluebird Society, Erie Co Ranger, DEC.
 - We want to have a sign-up sheet to help identify "Friends of Clarence Conservation", for which there was much excitement and interest in 2024.
 - "Go-to group" for volunteer service projects
 - A group of active volunteers interested in conservation
 - Possible group of people to supplement our committee's expertise areas and possible future committee members.
- Trail markers and trail marking (discussion)
 - Custom markers—what do we print on them? Some ideas include using the Conservation logo and "foot trail" with color on the outer rim of the disc. These will be aluminum and are custom printed. Its possible to make them specific to the venue, including "Clarence Nature Center" or "Beeman Creek Park" in the marker.
 - Trails in the meadow portion of the Nature Center may need posts in some sections. There was discussion of the best type of post, and metal ones would be too expensive. Most likely short pressure treated posts. Could install as an Arbor Day open house project.
 - Improved quality map of the Nature Center will go along with color coded markers. Mapping-Andrew Shaffer in Planning Dept. will help draft a new map with color coded trails. Cheryl is working with him on this.
- Tree maintenance (2024 and 2023 plantings)
 - Thanks to Sauls family; future efforts with Troop 27. They put up deer resistant tree tubes in the 2024 planting area viewable from Thompson Rd. They also inspected other tubes and set other fallen ones right. No sign of rodent or insect nests in the tubes. There are a few more and these will be moved to the storage shed at the Nature Center, now that it is available again.
 - Also invited Brooke Murdoch at CHS (Community Service Club; Environmental Club) to do pine tree capping. No firm date, but they are interested.
 - Need additional stakes to raise tubes. Bamboo stakes are short and flimsy. Not budgeted—have to wait until 2026. Can make them inexpensively from scrap pine boards or cedar fence pickets with a table saw. FYI, a box of 50 3 foot stakes from Home Depot costs about \$50.
- Tree Planting site for 2025
 - Confirming last meeting's decision: at Highway Department, likely on the north or northeast side of the new building. Need to visit site with councilman and highway superintendant James Dussing and verify this.
 - Probable date: Saturday April 19, 2025
 - Steve will reach out to Zeb and Osman to see what their thoughts are
 - If they are not, we can develop a back-up plan project.
- Bike Path Subcommittee (anyone interested?)

- Identify weaknesses, work with Parks and Highway to improve features
- Identify sites for conservation projects and recreation projects
- Our subcommittee has jurisdiction over trails in the Town
- Suggestion like crossings, signage, planting areas, bench or memorial sites

New Business:

- Field trip to Beeman Creek to see raptor nest sites and to scout trail work.
 - The proposed date of Saturday Dec. 7th was not ideal due to hunting season, we decided to defer until hunting season is over, especially for the trail marking which involves going into the woods.
 - A small group, including Joel Radder, will go to the site with Parks Dept. and councilman Altieri to identify raptor sites. Recently, owl boxes were installed, one on the south side of the meadow on Parker Rd that might be too close to a raptor nest. Need to scout this out.
- Tree City and Code Recommendations
 - Tree city shows that we, as a community, have an active, conservation mindset and make tree planting a priority. Shows who we are and shows what this committee does.
 - Tree city has four requirements (annual deadline Dec. 1). All this is being done and just needs some coordination to bring it to fruition. The Council can provide this leadership.
 - **an active tree board and/or department.** Could be Conservation Council or subcommittee. They are looking for a tree maintenance plan too. Councilman Shear noted that 6-8 Town employees are being trained in pruning which will help upkeep of the recently planted trees and existing trees on Town property and the right-of-way.
 - **a tree care ordinance.** Do not have. Ron Walkowiak has been working on developing language from other Tree City town codes and passing this on to Jonathan Bleuer in Planning Dept. Jon is assembling the new code language.
 - **a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita.** Need to document. This level of spending is likely, and trees are a now \$30K per year budget item in the Town budget.
 - **an Arbor Day observance and proclamation.** We already do it!!
 - Code changes:
 - Borrow language from adjacent towns that have Tree City designation, as Ron has begun to do already
 - Conservation Committee should advise the Town Council on Conservation Easements. There was wide support of this idea by the Council.
 - Conservation should give conservation impact on new property purchases and major developments. This will help integrate the use of this property into town recreation master plan; could be related to Greenprint purchases as well. If this is what is meant, perhaps the Code could be more explicit.

Meeting adjourned at 8:14pm

- **Next meeting date will be Dec 12, 2024 @ Clarence Town Park Clubhouse.** Note the change of venue.