

## **Minutes of Conservation Advisory Council, Sept. 12, 2024**

### **Meeting at the Nature Center**

Call to order at 7PM

Present: Cheryl Cantlon (chairing this session), Lori Sauls, Steve Diver, Bob Geiger, Casey Diederich, Chick Biegner, Bob Altieri, Joel Radder, Ron Walkowiak, Barbara Maisch, Paul Shear

Financial report: Lori Sauls reported no new expenses, the current spendable balance is \$721.98

Bob Geiger mentioned the Town is installing a memorial bench for Peter Wolfe, former Chair of the conservation advisory council, at the Escarpment sanctuary.

Ron and Barbara discussed their progress on the large tree survey, and passed out a few handouts to circulate in public places. The committee resoundingly commended them on their contributions to the Bee. Ron said that no new trees were reported; he is still cataloging the large trees on public land in the Town. Barb said there are four articles left this year. Will continue contributions next year, on various topics of conservation value or promoting education and awareness of Nature.

Cheryl thanked the Sauls and Hanks families for mulching at the Thompson Rd tree planting site.

Deer crossing signs at Goodrich-nothing new, but would be an added expense that the committee has not budgeted.

Trail improvement at Nature Center. This was done by Jason and the Parks department. They could not use the plastic grid/mesh as it was too flimsy. They instead built up the wettest section of trail with gravel. The committee is pleased with this work done by the Parks department as it should improve accessibility to the Nature Center trails from the Thompson Rd entrance.

Kayak launch- nothing new to report.

Raptor platforms at Beeman Creek. After discussions with Parks and Highway, it was decided that using a tree on site would be better than the time and expense of setting a pole. The committee thought the pole has some advantages and should not be ruled out. Height is a huge consideration but Parks has a bucket truck that could elevate to the needed height. There were some owl boxes placed in the park as a Boyscout project and we must be careful about location. The platforms should be erected soon as birds begin to scout new nesting sites in December onwards. Will continue to work with Jason and go on site to get some ideas about placement.

Barb asked about getting long sleeve shirts or hoodies for winter workdays. The CAC logo on grey material looks good. Some favored hoodies but most liked longsleeves. The committee urged to get quotes. Could order some of one and some of another without increased cost.

A new glass case was procured by Cheryl for educational displays in the Nature center. She would like to dedicate this one to the birds.

There is a film crew shooting a picture at the Nature Center from Sept 22 through Oct 2, inclusive. It is a film about werewolves called Frenzy Moon directed by Keith Lakowski, who made a cameo appearance at the meeting to answer questions about the movie and location shoot. The committee is hoping to get a few together to stop by and see the action and maybe sit in the director's chair.

Horse riding on Nature Center property was discussed. The Town Council suggested that Beeman Creek is the place to ride and is allowed, but not allowed on bike paths, parks or hiking/walking trails. The bridge on the trail from Thompson Rd was damaged by a horse riding on the bridge, and was promptly repaired by the Parks department to prevent injury to pedestrians using the trail. There was concern about people and families around large animals. New York state law, as noted on the DEC website, states that horse riding is not allowed on designated foot trails or in educational centers, so the Nature center property and trails are off limits to horse riding. The trails are labelled digitally but not all are blazed. This is being done but its slow because the council has to have labels made of different colors and attach them along all the trails. There are lots of horse riding trails in the area in Erie County.

The Haunted headlamp hike is scheduled for Saturday Oct 26<sup>th</sup> from 530pm to 730pm. Volunteers should arrive at the Nature Center at 430pm. The event is hosted by Evan Vahratian of the Family Support Center. He expects 50-70 people. Groups will go out on the loop trails every 30 minutes and tables will be on trail. The council will have trick or treat stations on the trail with conservation theme around wildlife: bats, owls and spiders. We need volunteers to staff the tables and looking for scout groups to help lead groups out.

Casey discussed progress on plans to improve Mill Pond at the Clarence Town Park on Main street. Working with the Buffalo Waterkeepers to submit a grant proposal to Fisher fund to fund a feasibility study to improve the pond and make it better for fishing access and enhanced conservation value. Already got a letter of support from the Council and would like one from the Town. Councilmen urged Casey to present this at the Planning Board meeting on Sept. 25 to give them an idea of the concept plan.

Budget was projected for 2025 with some loose estimates for speaker fees, infrastructure and supplies. The councilmen urged to get realistic numbers for each line item and then submit the budget. The budget is based on similarity to 2024 and will not be flexible enough to allow funding for other speakers, additional signage or unexpected purchases.

Next meeting is scheduled in the Hallock room at Town Place on October 10<sup>th</sup> at 7PM.

Minutes compiled by Steve Diver, Sept 18, 2024.