

Town of Monroe Conservation Commission

Monroe, New York
November 19, 2020

The Town of Monroe Conservation Commission met for a scheduled "Zoom" meeting on Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 8:00pm.

ZOOM MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 9:14 P.M.

Attendance: Ward Brower III, Joe Corona, Charles Pakula, Sandra Dunlap (not in attendance) and Nina Petito/ Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

- * We have a quorum and the meeting was convened at 9:30 P.M.
- * The Town of Monroe Conservation Commission has two vacancies.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- * On October 29, 2020 the Moodna Creek Watershed Inter-municipal Council meeting was held and the following topics were discussed:
 - 1.1 The 10th Anniversary celebration which was planned for sometime in November will not be held.
 - 1.2 Re the effort to install information kiosks in various member towns. Kiosks have been installed in Woodbury and Blooming Grove. Other kiosks are being considered. Jay Beaumont (the Chair) informed us that a number of information panels are ready to be installed. The Council is looking for Boy Scouts that would be willing to implement the kiosks. We will explore the possibility of identifying a local scout troop that may be interested in installing a kiosk in Monroe.
 - 1.3 Brown's Pond Dam repair - the dam is located at the intersection of routes 207 & 208. Simon Gruber, the commission member who is focused on the effort, reported that the required permit has been received from the DEC to repair or replace the dam, but the water first must be drained. This looks to be a multi year project.
 - 1.4 The erosion of the Moodna Creek embankment on Mill Street & Route 32 is awaiting help from the county.

- 1.5 There was an interesting presentation on the topic of “Enhancing Connectivity in the Region”. It centered on the movement and fluctuations of certain wild life between the local regions (Storm King Mountain, the Black Rock Forest and the Bear & Schunemunk Mountains). Essentially, the facts state that deer are thriving and carnivores are not. This has to do with the impact climate changes to their habitats and the difficulty animals have in traversing the highways, the roadways and the structures in the region. Animals are reluctant to traverse roads like the NYS Thruway, Route 17, etc. This inability to traverse the roadways impacts the numbers of species in each of the aforementioned regions which eventually leads to an imbalance in nature. This group is looking at potential solutions. Under consideration are the following:
- A. Replacing culverts with bridges
 - B. Creating wildlife overpasses or other safe passages.
- Essentially this effort will create safer and more effective crossings. This approach for “enhancing connectivity” has been proven effective in Canada and Alaska.
- 1.6 NYS Discrimination & Harassment training recorded webinar, dated November 10, 2020 - a NYMIR University user name and password are required to participate.
- 1.7 On Wednesday, December 9, 2020 from 12noon to 1pm “The Hudson River Estuary Program” is discussing the conservation and land use (101 webinar). The Solar Mapping Tool: supporting a responsible renewable energy future for the Hudson Valley.
- 1.8 On December 10, 2020 the “Connect Mid-Hudson Transit Study” is having a public meeting. In late 2018, Dutchess, Orange and Ulster counties began work on a regional transit Connect Mid-Hudson - a collaborative effort to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the existing regional transit network in the Mid-Hudson Valley, and to identify opportunities to improve regional connections (I.e. improve services between the three counties and services between the Mid-Hudson region to other regions such as New York City).
- A. Impacts of COVID on regional travel patterns
 - B. Pre-COVID service performance and customer satisfaction
 - C. Effectiveness of regional services
 - D. Opportunities for new technologies and service models
 - E. Capital improvements to alleviate corridor congestion and capacity constraints

CONSERVATION BUSINESS

- * The amended minutes for October were approved. Charles Pakula motioned to approve the minutes and Ward Brower III seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

- * Nina Petito is to contact Bonnie Franson (Planning Board Chair) about the brand, model and storage space (Esri work) for a new computer for the Conservation Commission.
- * On November 4, 2020 the Monroe Conservation Commission completed their site walk of the property titled "Bevacqua".

The Monroe Conservation Commission on November 4, 2020 conducted a site walk of the Bevacqua property located on 61 Talbot Road in Monroe, New York. The following are the commission's findings and recommendations.

OBSERVATIONS ON BEVACQUA PROPERTY

- 2.1 The property off Route 71 contains a fragile environment due to the topography. The land is steep and significantly sloped. It is our judgment that the sloping terrain presents a number of challenges. For example: there is a culvert on that property. There are visual indications that the culvert is producing a high volume of water which is resulting in considerable erosion.
- 2.2 A dominant feature of the property is a large number of dying and dead White Ash trees. The ash trees are probably suffering from disease and insect problems. Ash trees are normally found in rich, moist forest soil. The Monroe Conservation Commission believes this site receives a considerable amount of moisture throughout the year from higher surrounding elevations.

AREAS OF CONCERN AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.3 The site plan should be updated to indicate a more accurate reflection of the wetlands.
- 2.4 The plans indicate Route 71 to be upgrade and well within 100 foot well protection zone of the proposed domestic well. Route 71 is a source of pollution from it being heavily salted during the winter months. It is the Monroe Conservation Commission judgment that due to the location of the well that the winter salting provides a significant risk of contamination. Consideration should be given to a new well installation at least a distance of 200 feet from the roadway of Route 71.

NEW BUSINESS

- 3.1 Monroe Commons needs a site walk (area near old Lake Region Tire Shop)
A wetlands specialist will be necessary to walk this property.

- 3.2 Local Boy Scouts are needed to help construct a kiosk along the Heritage Trail in Monroe.
- 3.3 April 24, 2021 will be the next “Clean Sweep” for the Town of Monroe.
- 3.4 A letter will be sent to the Planning Board of Monroe about the Smith Farms phases 3 & 4. This will discuss the water and sewage troubles and problem

To the Monroe Planning Board Chair and Members

The Monroe Conservation Commission (MCC) has major concerns with the current, although expired, tentative approval for phases 3 & 4 of the project known as Smith Farms. The project, located both in the Town and Village of Monroe, has had many years of environment vetting. The MCC observed that there has been a significant change in the residential demographical multiplier use in this proposed residential project, ie there has been a change from “standard size family” to “super size family”. The new residential demographic multiplier use has had the unintended consequence of a de facto violation of the segmentation restriction in the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act-”SEQRA”. Segmentation fundamentally means using less intense environmental aspect of an activity when in reality the whole activity is more intense.

The MCC used the finding statement from the Town of Monroe’s Conservation Cluster Residential (CCR) floating zone document adopted July 13, 2020 to get a demographic value for the “standard size Family”. Page 7 from the document shows 2,500 to 2,700 square feet units with 4 bedrooms yield less than 4 persons per unit.

The MCC used statements from public hearings on the project known as “Raywood Drive” in 2020 to establish the number of persons per unit for a “super size family”. The Raywood project has proposed a 2,600 square foot per unit with 6 bedrooms with 2 people per bedroom yielding a total of 12 people per unit.

The increase of the persons per unit, potentially over 300% has had the effect of making the SEQRA findings inadequate and noncompliant. This deficiency will have a disastrous effect on infrastructure and the the environment. The MCC urges a more accurate and realistic SEQRA be done before any further development.

COMMENTS FROM ATTENDEES

- * Joe Corona will contact Sandra Dunlap about attending the next “Zoom” meeting.
- * Nina Petito will contact Bonnie Franson about laptop computer.
- * Ward Brower III has made a request to have our “Zoom” Conservation Commission meeting changed from Thursday, December 17, 2020 to Wednesday, December 16, 2020.

Ward Brower III motioned to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Charles Pakula and all voted in favor. There upon, Joe Corona adjourned the meeting at 10:02pm.

Nina Petito, Secretary

Next zoom meeting on Wednesday, December 16, 2020.