

## Draft WEST SENECA ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 27, 2022 at 7:00 PM

West Seneca Community Center – 1300 Union Rd., West Seneca

- I. MEMBERS – Cynn timer Gaasch (CG) Chair, Rick Rutkowski (RR) Vice-Chair, Evelyn Hicks (EH), Tracy Skalski (TS), Jacqueline Balikowski (JB), Patrick Healy (PH), Danielle Bagley (DB), Ryan Harrington (RH)  
Town Council Liason: Jeff Piekarec (JP)  
Guests: Leane Schultz, Stephanie Leguori, Paul Pietraszewski, Alex Goodwin, Peter Holdsworth, Brittany Hernon

### II. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

1. Meeting Minutes August 2022 – approved by members
2. Financial Report – as per CG:
  - 2022 WSEC Working Budget – \$1000.00
  - Town Environmental funds: -
    - National Fish and Wildlife Federation (NFWF) – \$2,710.76
    - US Fish & Wildlife Service - \$29,000.00
    - National Grid Mitigation Fund - \$61,000.00
  - CG requested that a member volunteer to serve as Treasurer
3. 2015, 2018, 2019, 2020 Annual Reports – EH advises that 2018, 2019, 2020 have been completed
4. Correspondence - letter rec'd from Town appointing CG as WSEC Chair

### III. WSEC PROJECTS - UPDATES/DISCUSSION

1. Oxbow (2805 Clinton St.) – proposed Nature Sanctuary – JP advises that Town Attorney is researching – No support from members - Also, RR sent e-mail to Mark Gaston (Erie Co. Soil and Water Conservation District) re: damaged sign at creek – RR will monitor – RR plans to plant milkweed seeds at site this fall; other members gathering seeds
2. Standing Subcommittee reports:
  - Creek Awareness and Safety
    - Presentation on hold – discussion re: potential venues to present – members suggested Library, Recreation Dept., Burchfield Nature and Art Center, School Env. Clubs (as an “after school” event)
    - Discussion re/ additional forums to connect with community re/ Creek Safety – QR Codes; connect with Police, Fire, Library; Know Your Backyard video;
  - Water Quality Issues Subcommittee:
    - Buffalo Creek Canoe/Kayak Launch – RR rec'd e-mail from NYSDEC allowing work by volunteer groups (must adhere to NYSDEC protocols) – EH advised that Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper will be involved in repairs
    - Residential Rain Barrels – no requests rec'd (2 remain in storage)
  - Tree Issues Subcommittee –
    - Young Development – CG noted that trees planted at Harlem Rd. Park, BNAC are surviving 2 at Harlem appear dead. Will need to check on trees in Spring 2023– DB will monitor/report re: trees at Switzer Park
    - Re Tree in Town Parks - DB advises that she has not rec'd a response from the Re Tree group
  - Education Subcommittee:
    - CG advises that the education topics and approaches-will be discussed at future meetings as part of a strategic planning process.
    - Seasonal updates to Env. Corner -TS suggests that topics be presented at different seasons of the year - potentially:
      - Fall: Climate Action in Community, street drain maintenance

- Winter: salt smart initiative
- Spring/Summer: Climate action, Creek Awareness, lawn care (mowing, pesticide reduction), deer awareness

#### IV. TOWN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

1. Canisius Property (2885 Clinton St.) – ballfield development - ongoing – JP advises that work being performed complies with Town Codes
2. Discussion of bringing a Town staff member to an Environmental Commission meeting in order to review permitting process and where the Environmental Commission may fit in (CG will contact)
3. Clean Watersheds Needs Survey – Discussion that this is a Project for Town to undertake and JP will connect about this with appropriate staff/ department

#### V. ISSUES OF THE PUBLIC

1. Biking safety – RR sent ltr to NYS officials re: improved safety measures – needs bike clubs approval, lobbying/networking
  - a. Revisit our original letter and the Regional Biking Master Plan
  - b. Discussion of how to ensure that the Town is achieving safer streets and the need for a Transportation Plan Task Force (EH)
2. Center Rd. repaving – add color to road shoulder – paving has been completed
3. No Mow May – residential campaign to benefit pollinators - RR reports that Town Code mandates 6” height limit from May- Oct. and a variance of some type would have to be obtained – JP advises, due to complaints rec'd, that a variance would not be received well – CG suggest supporting “Pollinator Friendly” opportunities
4. NYSEG Climate Change Kickoff Event - 9/22 – PH attended, said that info was not pertinent to WSEC activities
5. Deer Management (CG) - Deer Task Force/Town plan components:
  - Local law was adopted: No Deer Feeding Allowed – warnings, possible ticketing/fines
  - Signage (No Deer Feeding Allowed) to be posted in parks, postcards re: same to be mailed
  - Resident survey to be conducted
  - Cornell Cooperative Extension to advise re: garden plants averse to deer browsing
6. Buffalo Creek Flood Plain Reconnection - next steps – public hearings to be conducted
7. North America Ind Park –
  - a. Large Company with major project in North America Park there are implications for the area wetlands
  - b. October 11 public meeting is too tight of a timeline for Environmental Commission to submit a formal opinion. Individuals may submit letters to the Planning Committee
  - c. Resident of Lein Rd. complained of timing of the meeting, at a time when most people are working, with short notice, noise concerns, truck traffic in illegal areas – (complaints should be addressed to Town Board)
  - d. Separate from this conversation is the issue of Town ordinances and Wetlands. EH will review sample ordinances other Towns have adopted

#### VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Setting strategy going forward – general topics:
  - EH advises that no green infrastructure opportunities are in Town Codes, and that the WSEC can identify/review model ordinances for the Town to adopt
  - Logistics for future meetings were discussed – Nov. meeting to be rescheduled (11/29, 7:00 P.M.) - Dec meeting cancelled

Adjourned – 8:47 p.m.