

WEST SENECA ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, November 29, 2022 at 7:00 PM

West Seneca Community Center – 1300 Union Road, West Seneca

Present: MEMBERS – Cynn timer Gaasch (CG) Chair, Evelyn Hicks (EH), Tracy Skalski (TS), Jacqueline Balikowski (JB), Danielle Bagley (DB), Ryan Harrington (RH), Patrick Healy (PH),

Excused: Rick Rutkowski (RR), Town Council Liaison: Jeff Piekarec (JP)

Additional Members of the public in attendance

MINUTES

I. Welcome

II. Approval of October Meeting Minutes

Motion by Cynn timer Gaasch, Ryan Harrington first, Evelyn Hicks 2nd

Motion passed

III. Issues of the Public - none

IV. Discussion of approach for conducting a new strategic plan for the WSEC

- 1st step of process – assigning responsibilities - build a comprehensive list of information gathering. Please bring information share information sources you would like to pursue.

Additional sources:

- i. Bylaws http://www.westseneca.net/application/files/5415/4038/7871/Bylaws_Rev._1_-_9-30-18.pdf

A review of the bylaws- do reflect what we are doing and what we need to do, are there modifications to law and what we are doing to align with the law.

Jackie Balikowski- will take bylaws and town code. Bylaws were last updated in 2018

- ii. Town Code <http://www.westseneca.net/departments-and-services/environmental-commission#established>
[Committee agreed to read code and discuss we are volunteers.](#)
[Discussion of the responsibilities and resources we can engage, go away learn and bring back or go away find people to bring back](#)

Town code was read by commission members

- iii. NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Commission discussion- commission wants education on what DEC does & what their priorities are, what studies have they done. Have Julie Barrett O'Neill come talk to us. Tracy Skalski- climate smart community programs are starting. Tracy has a contact to bring in speaker.

- iv. Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper-perhaps bring someone in to speak

- v. Other towns' / municipalities best practices

Evelyn Hicks-suggested that Danielle Bagley look into other town and WS tree policies.

Tracy Skalski- volunteered to investigate this item

Evelyn Hicks-Erie County environmental management counsel-Evelyn Hicks stated this commission should have 1 person at these meetings on 3rd Tuesday of month at fire training center in Cheektowaga Evelyn Hicks suggest commission have someone going to those meetings. Tracy states they are an advisory board to the county executive.

Leann Schultz-Town resident offered to do this. Sue Kims will facilitate the town board approval. Evelyn Hicks states we will need town board to make the approval and appointment.

Patrick Harrington-has worked with waterkeeper

Chair-Margaux Valenti- the BNWaterkeeper staff attorney is willing to come speak on SEQR process.

Chair will work with Tracy on municipalities

- vi. Public strategic planning session(s) – Tracy is interested in this and Ryan is interested in supporting public outreach through social media. Ryan Harrington-volunteered for public outreach-social media. Tracy Skalski currently runs and would appreciate Ryan’s help.

- vii. Others?

Evelyn Hicks water quality and flow of water thru towns-willing to head sub committee on water quality. Focus on active water

Grant from Jacobs School of Medicine on stream sampling working with High School (they will present to Commission). Comprehensive grant.

Chair suggest we approach Waterkeeper, DEC, and other existing sources and bring back to us to find holes.

Tracy Skalski-Lupa-Erie county hands watershed for Erie and Niagara county, also storm water coalition, Evelyn Hicks states that engineering does a report on this as we are part of that

Chair suggest Evelyn keep working with waterkeeper and bring back their priorities back to us.

Discussion with public about the don’t feed the deer signage

Danielle Bagley would like to work with the re-tree and bike path, chair suggest that learning how we can make WS more bike friendly should be part of the planning. Danielle Bagley will be contact with Go-Bike.

Discussion of having speakers come in for 15–20-minute presentations with resources.

Evelyn discussed resources, Cornell cooperative NRCS in East Aurora,

- V. Approve potential purchases with \$1,000 in 2022 budget

-Danielle Bagley called two nursery they wont lock in prices due to economy

Discussion that commission doesn’t usually spend much money, last expenditure was the storm drain medallions and the rain barrels, printing

Motion by chair to encumber the money for the previously discussed workshops at \$75 each for a total of 225 with Cornell cooperative extension, evenings in February march before gardening season.

Evelyn Hicks called for vote-all yea

VI. Reports for ongoing projects

- Danielle Bagley-ReTree project completed planting 8 trees-planted on right side of walk path
- Erie County Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardener provided workshops will be scheduled once the Town meeting schedule is set for 2023
- Tracey Skalski and Danielle Bagley November 1st had meeting with GoBike and WS Bikes Bikes, regarding Center Road (see attached) gave information on what the commission should be doing. Our comprehensive plan should be updated every 5 years. Evelyn Hicks states that the comprehensive plan was updated. Chair states that what is on website is older. It was updated in 2016. Create and adopt complete street policy. Assemblyman Pat Burke has funding available to assist in active mobility plan-the commission needs to follow up and ask for the plan to be created and then burke will hire go bike to do the work they will create the plan around walking biking and access to
 - Commission should also contact greater transportation counsel-they have funding for corridors if they are on the bike master plan. Go bike would be hired for that.
 - Would help design corridor and create active mobility plan- we need the supervisor and the town board on board with the above-actions.Evelyn Hicks read from the comprehensive plan-
[http://westseneca.net/sites/default/files/WS%202016%20Comprehensive%20Plan%20ADOPTED\(3\).pdf](http://westseneca.net/sites/default/files/WS%202016%20Comprehensive%20Plan%20ADOPTED(3).pdf)
Discussion of Center Road-
 - Discussion of a letter to the town board, Tracey Skalski will work on this
 - if there were funds where there where did they go ?
- Tracy Skalski-NYS Grant Opportunity for Garden (see attached) due January 10
Vegetable food garden, grant writer was cc in email to supervisor if we could get grant they are awarded in April
Tips-hold community meeting, who would be interested in helping, decide on location, water source, what to do with food, who would take care of it, homeschool, eagle scout, decided we need a task force
Tracy Skalski and Danielle Bagley will work with grant writer
- Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper Floodplain Bench Project
Evelyn Hicks- BN Waterkeeper has a grant on reconnection of buffalo creek between Union and Harlem road for the eventual benefit of evaluating flooding on southside of buffalo creek, a grant is active will be completed by dec with a report of contour studies flow volume, velocity and benefit of reconnecting flood plane for accepting water and divert water away from main channel during high water incidents, discussion with project manager regarding report and tie back to comprehensive plan. Project moving forward with data required from SEQR waterkeeper has another funding source for next phase. Catherine is interested in presenting to commission

VII. Governance

- Election of Officers in January, per Bylaws

Chair is appointed the rest are elected, please reach out to Chair if interested in holding an officer position;

- Membership Terms. For members whose terms are completing in December, a renewal should be put in writing to the Town Board. We are seeking new members

<http://www.westseneca.net/departments-and-services/environmental-commission/committee-members#jsc.tab=0>

VIII. New Business

- Potential Guest Speakers for January and February

Monday Jan 23rd-Evelyn will see if high schoolers working on creek research are available chair will see if Katherine Winkler from Waterkeeper to discuss the floodplain project or Margaux Valenti from Waterkeeper is available to discuss SEQR process.

- 1633 Center Development Project (see attached)
- 5700 Seneca Development Project (see attached)

Discussion on input and advisement per code to town board,

Jackie Balikowski suggested we have a written unbiased test to form this advisement rather than mere opinion.

Evelyn Hicks-volunteered to make a draft proposal of ideas and prong tests

-Evelyn Hicks-battery storage accommodated all the town requests-now going before the county for SEQR

IX. Adjourn motion by Chair 8:45

Next Meeting: January 23, 2022