

## **Pawling Conservation Advisory Board - Minutes**

**Thursday 3/19/26, 6pm, American Legion Building**

Present: Robert Bergdall – Chairman, Mark Chipkin, Rick Wilson, Marie Vedder, Deborah Stewart, Joe Willie, Steven DiFalco, Lou Trombetta

Absent: Laura Facchin, Lori Asquith

Guests: Beekman CAC Chairperson – Suzette Lopane  
SUNY New Paltz Intern – Grace Jay

- 1) Grape Hollow State Forest – 3/2 Meeting with DEC Senior Forester Matthew Paul
  - a. Land is transitioning from NYS 480a forestry land to full state ownership.
  - b. Area will be incorporated into east of Hudson Unit Management Plan.
  - c. Mr. Paul favors adding multiple-use trails to the site which would be able to accommodate mountain biking. He feels engaging with mountain biking groups gives DEC greater control and accountability from that constituency.
    - i. Group discussed concerns regarding allowing mountain biking on the property, and how it is not allowed in nearby sites (ie: Depot Hill, West Mountain State Forest), and the possibility for illegal trail construction.
    - ii. Joe – Noted the existence of extensive mountain biking trails nearby in Ulster.
    - iii. Lou – Based on Oblong Land Conservancy experience, trail maintenance can be very difficult and labor intensive.
  - d. Suzette – Will be attempting to get Beekman Town Board interested in pursuing a grant from DEC/Cornell on Conserving Forests through Municipal Land-use Planning. This would build on Beekman’s established NRI.
    - i. Group discussed how to ascertain more information about the biology of the site.
    - ii. Marie – Will be reaching out to FrOGS board member John Foley regarding turtle species on site.
- 2) Solar Installation – Joe
  - a. No update. Rob & Mark will be discussing the next stage of this project during their planned 3/25 meeting with Supervisor Giordano.
- 3) CAB Intern – Grace Jay, Steven
  - a. Map has been updated to include tax parcel lines.
  - b. Agricultural districts added but coloration will need to be changed to make them clearer.
    - i. Many of these districts have become forested
  - c. Currently conserved areas are shown, but this does not currently include land with easements or parcels in the 480a program.
  - d. Steven – Noted this mapping could be incorporated into an eventual NRI or OSI
  - e. Suzette – Suggested it may be helpful to note different wetlands types
- 4) 2026 Earth Day – Rick, Marie
  - a. Rick would like to put together written guides for potential hikes on Earth Day. The guides would explain the history and biology of the trail section in question and its surrounding areas. He may also lead one of these hikes with likely starting point at RT22 trailhead.

- b. Marie – Noted that the Harlem Valley Appalachian Trail Community is holding a volunteer event on 4/19 to repair and clean up the boardwalk. Pre-registration is required.
- 5) Planning Board
  - a. Both 3/2 and 3/16 meetings were cancelled.
  - b. Group discussed current conservation sub-division regulation existing in Pawling.
- 6) Town Board - Meeting w Supervisor Giordano scheduled for 3/25
  - a. Solar installation
  - b. Grants selection and administration
  - c. Open space preservation
  - d. General communication
- 7) CAB Annual Report
  - a. Robert presented the 2/2025 – 2/2026 report compiled based on monthly meeting minutes. Board members should reach out if they have any ideas for improvement or clarification.
- 8) Website – Debbie
  - a. Received go-ahead from Dutchess Land Conservancy, HVATC, and Oblong Land Conservancy to list their information on website. Still waiting on FrOGS.
  - b. Received permissions for photo use.
  - c. Group discussed review of current draft site. Agreed layout and photos look great. Robert suggested moving some materials currently nested in “Resources and Education” section onto the homepage.
  - d. Debbie – Discussed adding information on free PFAS testing now available for Dutchess & Putnam County residents.
- 9) Tree Board – Mark, Lori
  - a. Mark presented memo from Lori outlining specifics of tree donation program.
  - b. Mark and Wendel will be attending Tree City USA luncheon in Poughkeepsie 3/26.
- 10) County Planning Roundtable Event
  - a. No one was able to attend but Steven will make a PDF of the presentations available.
- 11) Textile Recycling
  - a. Marie located program that provides free local pickup, and transfer station boxes, that pay back up to \$1,500 per year.
  - b. Inquiry needed regarding agreement with current vendor at transfer station.
- 12) Green Burial – Marie
  - a. The group discussed some of the low carbon burial approaches now available locally, natural burial, and in NYS in general, composting.
  - b. Marie will be approaching faith leaders and cemetery directors to educate them about the local availability of natural burial.