Conservation Advisory Board of Grand Island
May 23, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Present: Jim Czapla, Bob Wynne, Alice Gerard, Sue Tomkins, Paul Yaeger, Diane Evans, Jeff Green, Ed Standora, Sam Akinbami, Mike Madigan (liaison), new alternate, Forrest Crawford. Guests: Judy Schmidt, Bob Eddy, Rachel Chrostowski.

Excused: Tom Burke

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by Jeff Green. We welcomed Forrest Crawford, our new alternate member. He told us about himself. Each member told him why we serve on the board.

1. WNYLC – Open Space Inventory Update - Rachel Chrostowski reported that there are 187 parcels in the database that are over 10 acres. These are parcels that are either vacant or underdeveloped. She showed us several digital maps including one with all 187 parcels, then successive maps with these breakdowns, all based on 2016 data sets:
   - Parks and Conservation areas
   - Natural Land Cover
   - Headwater Forests
   - Streams and FEMA Floodplains
   - Wetlands – Federal and NYS DEC
   - Farm Soils – from USDA
   - TNC Climate Resiliency Score- from The Nature Conservancy
     This reflects the land’s ability to remain ecologically viable in the face of climate change

We discussed the limited protection on ag land making it vulnerable to being developed. Parcels in Ag districts aren’t necessarily used for farming. We reviewed our priority list (developed at the last meeting) and decided to keep farmland as #10. A new Ag plan is being developed for Grand Island. We need to keep in step with that and try to be consistent with it. Question was raised where to rank DEC wetlands.

Keeping in mind our ultimate goal to rank parcels for protection, Rachel then showed us the scoring sheet she created from our priority list and all the feedback we’ve given her. We discussed at length the scoring sheet. We decided to establish levels of scoring, representing low, middle, high, and critical. The word “critical” will be changed. We decided to use SBL numbers (Section Block Lot) to identify parcels on the maps and database. Some minor changes will be made to the scoring sheet which Rachel will send us. She reminded us that at the finish of the project we will be getting the maps in PDF form, an Excel table showing the database,
Shape file with prioritized parcels for use in GIS software, and a final report. We need to make decisions about where to store the maps and data we receive, and how many copies of each we want.

2. **Consent Agenda – Motion**: Bob moved that we accept both February and April meeting minutes with spelling corrections. Jim seconded. Carried 9-0.

3. **Education Update** – Positive Comments were made by those attending the May 16 program on Habitat Restoration by Waterkeeper and DEC. Alice is writing an article for the Dispatch. All were encouraged to go to the sites to see the progress. Jim raised the idea that educational signage at sites like Little Beaver be put up so people understand the purpose of the project. Likewise, comments were made on the great success of the Arbor Day event on May 4.

4. **EDAB Letter** (Economic Development Advisory Board) Letter was shared via email and printed copy of EDAB’s letter encouraging our boards to work together to develop eco-tourism and advance tasks set out in the new Comp Plan. Jeff will draft a response to their letter and email to us. In such, he will invite and encourage any of their board to attend any of our meetings. **Motion**: Alice moved that we send a response letter to EDAB, Bob seconded. Carried, 9 – 0. Judy Schmidt announced that they are making a promotional video about GI. We are welcome to suggest any contributions. Judy also said the Parks and Rec Master Plan committee and EDAB are investigating way-finding signs for the Island.

5. **Tree Ordinance** – Jeff sent final draft (after Lawyer made changes) to Town Board. Bev Kinney said she’s put it on EDAB’s agenda. Parks and Rec meet next week and will make comments. Jeff will follow through with Planning Board. Diane asked if we can get an Arbor Day Proclamation after the fact, since Tree City USA will require that when we apply. Mike will look into it.

6. **Town Board Report** – Mike is proposing a change to the Town Code that the CAB be required to see new development plans with any new project that has environmental concerns. We again discussed the importance of being made aware of SEQR applications. It was reported that there have been changes in the site plans for Southpointe since the last public hearing in 2013.

7. **Additional News/Announcements/comments** - Jim suggested we foster a working relationship with State Parks. Greg Brown, Dave Spiering, or other Park staff could be invited to come to a future meeting. Diane said that Bev Kinney has expressed interest in meeting with Jim Ehde, after his letter about septic systems on the island. Update on future educational programs include Ed giving a presentation on his work with reptiles (November), and a guided walk at Gallogly in the fall, if the trails are completed. Diane announced she received the SPCA’s Humane Educator of the Year award.
Alice made a motion to adjourn at 9:12 pm. Bob seconded. Carried 9 – 0

*Next Meeting is June 27*

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Evans
Recording Secretary