Conservation Advisory Board
July 28th, 2016 meeting

Attendance: Sam Akinbami, Ron Rezabek, Jeff Green, Diane Evans, Dorothy Westhafer, and Alice Gerard. Mary Rossi and Suzanne Tomkins) are excused. Ed Standora was absent. Town Board Liaison Ray Billica was present. Guests at the meeting were Dave Reilly, Nicole Gerber, and Bob Eddy

Chair Diane Evans called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

June minutes: Ron Rezabek moved to accept the June minutes as submitted, and Jeff Green seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Announcements:
Paddles Up! is scheduled for this Saturday. Alice Gerard will cover it for the Island Dispatch.

Town Board report:
- **Mary Rossi**: Ray Billica will submit Mary Rossi’s resignation from the Conservation Advisory Board to the Town Board, who will accept it with a certificate of appreciation.
- **Trapping law**: A public hearing was held. The town board debated the issue, and the law passed by the vote of three to two. According to Ray Billica, the law didn’t satisfy anybody. The law that was approved was the last version that was discussed at the Conservation Advisory Board. It was presented with some tweaking.
- **Scenic Woods**: Ray Billica said that the town is waiting for the matching grant. Discussion was held about placing a “trails coming soon” sign in Scenic Woods and about the status of the area. Right now, it is designated as “open space.” Once the trails are in place, Scenic Woods would get park status. Also, any money that is spent before the grant is awarded will not be reimbursed. The grant only covers expenditures that take place after the grant is awarded.

Discussion on trapping: Visitor Dave Reilly spoke on the issue. He mentioned that there were two versions of the trapping law. One version banned sport trapping on public land, and the other created designated locations for sport trapping. One of those designated locations was Scenic Woods, currently listed as an open space. Dave Reilly requested that the board reconsider its decision on sports trapping on town-owned lands.

Discussion was held about:
- Sport trapping with a permit and the process for getting a permit (people make their application, which is forwarded to both the Conservation Advisory and the Parks and Recreation Advisory boards. The boards make their recommendations to the Town Board. The decision on whether or not to issue a permit is made by the Town Board).
- Nuisance trapping
- Scientific research
- Scenic Woods: According to Diane Evans, the board has decided that it does not want it to be designated as a trapping area.

Old business:
- **West River Bike path**: Discussion ensued about the proposed bike path along the West River. Concerns about it include:
  - a. The Town Board has not sponsored this new project
  - b. The project has become a political football
  - c. The proposal included too much parking
  - d. Closing off the parkway cuts off access
  
  Sam Akinbami reported that meetings were held with various boards, but not everyone came. No presentations were done at the meetings. Diane Evans, who attended the presentation on July 20th, said that C&S Engineers did not do a good job. Several people said that the information was not presented to anyone before the July 20th public information session. Ron Rezabek asked for people to write comments and send them to Mark Thomas, regional director of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

- **Living shoreline for the linear bike path**: Diane Evans said that, due to drought, this has been a bad year for planting. The planting could be done in the fall. The people who will participate will be Suzanne Tomkins, Alice Gerard, and Diane Evans.

- **Emerald Ash Borer task force**: According to Diane Evans, the task force has had several meetings. The task force membership includes several town employees. There have been requests to do the program on the emerald ash borer again next spring. The program, Jeff Green said, was well attended. One issue to be discussed is medicating trees, rather than taking them down. Several trees on town land, however, have been identified as being beyond saving. There is concern about the trees on town right of ways, due to safety concerns. As for trees on private land, homeowners have the option of treating their own trees.

- **Long range planning committee**: Diane Evans showed us the packet of materials provided by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, which included activities and events. The Conservation Advisory Board was requested to do a presentation on its activities in August. Ray Billica requested a delay, due to lack of time to prepare. Diane Evans will ask for more time. October was suggested as a good time for us to present. Conservation Advisory Board members who will attend the long range planning committee will be Diane Evans, Suzanne Tomkins, and Sam Akinbami.

- **Septic systems program**: Mary Rossi arranged for Jennifer Delaney and Jim Ehde to do the presentation. Because Jennifer Delaney will be busy in September, it was recommended that the program be done late in October or early in November. Locations suggested for the presentation was the Middle School or the Library. The Middle School was mentioned as the preferred location. Funding will come from the Erie County Clean Water Authority. Mary Rossi will prepare and design post cards, and Erie County will pay for printing and mailing. The post cards will go to the approximately 2,500 properties that are on septic systems.

- **Money from Majestic Woods wetland mitigation**: There is a little over $29,000 in the mitigation fund. One possibility is to buy the Taefi property. The location of the approximately 20 acres in this property is bounded by Baseline, Bush, and Ferry roads. It is mostly wetlands. Sam Akinbami will get in touch with the property owner.

- **Department of Environmental Conservation**: As for purchasing land that could be developed, such as a woodland or an open space, Ron Rezabek said that he will follow up on this. He is working with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and said that Tim DePriest has money that he wants to spend on Grand Island.
New Business: This will be saved for the September meeting. That meeting will include a brainstorming session to plan for a presentation for the long range planning meeting. Sam Akinbami suggests that each member of the board come up with concepts of what Grand Island should be in the future, from an ecological perspective.

Radiation on Long Road: Jeff Green said that he wants more information about this. He said that he found out in The Buffalo News that Dan Telvock went around Long Road, near Grand Island Boulevard, with a Geiger counter. We need to address this.

Empire Pipeline: Diane Evans reported that National Fuel wants to transport fracked gas from Pennsylvania, through Grand Island, with stations in Niagara Falls. She said that Sam and Pat Akinbami were part of the battle against the Empire Pipeline back in the 1990s. The pipeline is owned by Enbridge. Discussion ensued about the pipeline. Jeff asked if there will be any updates to or expansion of existing pipeline on Grand Island. Ray Billica said that he could check into that.

Jeff Green made a motion that the Town of Grand Island enquire about proposed updates of natural gas pipelines on the island. Sam Akinbami seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

Next meeting: September 22nd.

Roundabout: New York State Department of Transportation put trees in the roundabout and then told the town to take care of the trees. Water bags have been placed on the trees.

Adjournment: Alice Gerard moved to adjourn the meeting, and Diane Evans seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Alice Gerard, for Mary Rossi