Grand Island
Conservation advisory board
Meeting minutes
May 24th, 2017

Present: Diane Evans, Ron Rezabek, Suzanne Tomkins, Jeffrey Green, Alice Gerard, and Bob Wynne. Town Board Liaison Ray Billica was also excused. Sam Akinbami, Ed Standa- dora, and Paul Yeager were excused. One guest, Bob Eddy, was also present.

Chair Diane Evans called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Recording secretary: Bob Wynne moved that the minutes be accepted as submitted, and Suzanne Tomkins seconded the motion. The motion carried

Presentation: Anam Hussain, a student at Grand Island Senior High School, came to talk to us about a possible ordinance to ban plastic bags on Grand Island. She and another student, Sheila Kelly, have been researching the benefits to the environment of a ban on plastic bags. Many of the plastic bags get thrown away and end up in landfills. Because they are light weight, they blow into water. Animals eat the plastic bags. In addition, the overwhelming majority of plastic bags are not recycled. Stores, which accept plastic bags for recycling, only accept clean, dry bags. One suggestion that was made was to produce a brochure/pamphlet on the issue of plastic bags. Anam Hussain also mentioned that she has friends who do art and that they could make signs about a potential plastic bag ban. She will also look into issues involving other types of bags at a supermarket, such as meat and produce bags. Anam Hussain was thanked for coming to speak to the Conservation Advisory Board.

In addition, a potential local law on banning plastic bags was distributed.

Announcements and communications:
Diane Evans reported that the Assumption Cemetery project is moving along and that the Western New York Land Conservancy is close to an agreement with the Catholic diocese.

iMaps invasives workshop: Diane Evans and Paul Yaeger attended this. It was held on May 6th at the Grand Island Memorial Library. They reported that it went very well.

Invasives removal at Buckhorn Island State Park: this has already started.
Planning Board meeting: Diane Evans will attend on June 12th.

Old Business:

Arbor Day: Diane Evans reported that it went well, but the group couldn’t plant trees because the ground was too wet. Since then, two trees were planted but it was a difficult project.

Water Quality issue: Diane Evans reported that Jennifer Delaney of the Erie County Health Department said that there is no more testing that the county can do. She suggested continuing educational efforts.

Review process for members attending planning board meetings: We need one to two people to go to the meetings and raise our concerns. We could also email concerns to the planning board. Jeff Green has made a list of concerns, which Diane Evans will send to the planning board. She also suggested that we could invite people who do presentations to the planning board to also do presentations for us.

New Business:

Planning Board meeting, May 8th: Ron Rezabek and Alice Gerard attended. Ron talked about a proposed solar farm between Bedell Road and Industrial Drive. The addresses are 2411 Bedell Road and Industrial Drive. He said that he had concerns because the I-190, which borders the property, is the number one pollutant on Grand Island. He said that the only school that is not polluted is Kaegebein Elementary School. Ron Rezabek mentioned tall hedges in a 25-foot buffer zone that could absorb pollutants from the road. Suzanne Tomkins suggested that Norm Stessing from the planning board speak to us about the solar projects.

A public hearing on the solar farm is set for June 5th.

Long Range Planning Committee: Sue Tomkins and Diane Evans said that they want to present our vision at the next Long Range Planning Committee meeting. Bob Wynne suggested discussing the I-190 as a natural barrier and a source of pollution. Diane Evans talked about issues that affect Grand Island, which includes the lack of a town center. Things that were suggested were bike rentals, bathrooms, and a bike ferry between Grand Island and Tonawanda. Jajean Burney and Nancy Smith of the Western New York Land Conservancy would like to do a presentation for the Long Range Planning Committee but they’d like to wait until after the fall elections are over.

Conservation issues for us to promote include:

- Tree ordinance
- Protection of streams
- Wildlife corridor
- Engagement of land conservancy in planning
- Pollution reduction
- Ideas for how to deal with the I-190
• Water quality

Tree ordinance: A new subcommittee is being formed to put together a tree ordinance. It will consist of Ron Rezabek, Bob Wynne, and Ed Standora.

Next meeting: June 22nd.

Adjournment: Diane Evans moved to adjourn the meeting, and Suzanne Tomkins seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Alice Gerard