

Conservation Advisory Council | City of Newburgh, New York

The Heritage Center, 123 Grand St., Newburgh, NY 12550

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Council Members:

Chuck Thomas | Chair

Gail Fulton

Zachary German

Chris Knasiak

Lesly Mejia

Mark Sanchez-Potter



Conservation Advisory Council

Minutes of Meeting

June 3, 2024

6:30 p.m. – Heritage Center

- **Roll Call**

Present:

**Gail Fulton, Zachary German, Chris Knasiak,
Mark Sanchez-Potter**

Also Present:

**Tallie Carter, Assistant Corporation Counsel
J.K. Gentile, Secretary**

Guests:

**Kathy Lawrence, Elisabeth Balachova, Savonni Bailey,
Tyrees Canigan, Steven Gonzalez, Ashley Martinez,
Michelle Prado, Julia Raskin**

Excused Absent:

Chuck Thomas, Chairperson

Unexcused Absent:

Lesly Mejia

Meeting called to order 6:35p.m.

- **Public Comment on Agenda Items**

None

- **Environmental Justice Fellows 2024 Program**

Kathy Lawrence welcomed the Environmental Justice Fellows to the meeting.
She said Michelle Prado was unable to attend the meeting.

Elisabeth Balachova is the new Environmental Justice Program Manager. This is a new position for the Environmental Justice Program (EJP). Ms. Balachova will assist with connecting economic development and ecological sustainability. Currently she is working on developing brochures and surveys.

EJF Steven Gonzalez's pillar in Environmental Justice is assisting with public relation design materials and developing the EJF midway and final report.

EJF Ashley Martinez's pillar is assisting with sponsorship.

EJF Savonni Bailey's pillar is assisting with community engagement, particularly with Newburgh youth.

EJF Tyrees Canigan's pillar is assisting with community engagement, particularly with Newburgh youth.

Ms. Lawrence reported: EJF will be creating a course at the Armory Unity Center for 1st to 6th graders in the fall, the EJF closing party is scheduled for October 12, 2024, looking forward to working on a planting plan with the CAC, following up on the trees and the tree stewards from last year's planting and a spreadsheet with this information is pending.

Administration

- Board Appointments: Welcome new CAC members: Zachary German and Chris Knasiak.

Appointment terms:

Gail Fulton expires 11/2024

Mark Sanchez-Potter expires 12/24.

The Assistant Corporation Counsel asked that the annual letter of disclosure be signed, notarized and submitted upon appointment.

- Approval of minutes -March 2024
Motion to approve: Gail Fulton
Motion seconded: Mark Sanchez-Potter
The motion passed unanimously.
- Monthly Financial Report
No new expenses to report.

- Volunteer Hours -tracking and reporting
The secretary will send the link to the volunteer hours reporting spreadsheet to the new members.
- Training
The Assistant Corporation Counsel will send the Council a link to the mandatory training videos and affirmation. She asked that the affirmation be submitted to the secretary as soon as the training has been completed.
- 2023 Annual Report
The Chairperson was not present to give a status update. The secretary to send the Council the 2022 annual report for reference.
- CAC Website
The Chairperson was not present to discuss. The Council reviewed the letter prepared by the Chairperson and the Assistant Corporation Counsel asked the Council to review the current CAC webpage against the Chairperson's letter.
- 2025 Budget
The Assistant Corporation Counsel asked the Council to begin preparing for the 2025 CAC budget and that a discussion will be held at the July 2024 CAC meeting in preparation of submission in August 2024.

New Business

- Information request for the Newburgh landing pier -Tabled.
- City of Newburgh Green Infrastructure Feasibility Report -Tabled.

Old Business

- NYSDEC Urban and Community Forestry Grant.
The Assistant Corporation Counsel reported that the City has not received the contract from the DEC and once it is received, an RFP for a consultant to conduct a tree inventory will be submitted.
- Shoreline Planting Plan -draft letter
Mr. Sanchez-Potter reported that a letter has not been formalized.
The Council discussed visiting the site and taking notes to be discussed at the July CAC meeting.

- BOA Open Space Steering Committee -draft letter
Mr. Sanchez-Potter reported that a letter has not been formalized.
The Council discussed developing a collected response from the CAC.
- Riversweep Event follow up-Tabled.
- **On-going Updates**
Sub-Committees:
- Urban Forestry Sub-Committee.
 - 1) Spring tree planting plan
 - 2) Fall tree planting plan

The Assistant Corporation Counsel reported that the CAC will move forward with a tree planting and maintenance plan once the Consulting Arborist, Angelo Schemari, MS, role becomes active. She said a meeting between the CAC, Mr. Schemari and the Department of Public Works is forthcoming.

- 3) Ash Tree DEC grant

The Assistant Corporation Counsel reported that in 2022, 14 trees were treated and are due for a 2-year follow up that will be completed by the consulting arborist.

- 4) CAC Pruning Workshop

The Assistant Corporation Counsel informed that the city is not offering a Citizen Pruning program or workshop at this time. The CAC can conduct general education events and, Assistant Corporation Counsel suggests the recommendations she provided be considered.

- 5) Arbor Day Event -follow up

The Assistant Corporation Counsel reported the event was successful and next year the City of Newburgh will celebrate 20 years as a “Tree City USA” by the Arbor Day Foundation.

- Newburgh Climate Ready
Mr. German expressed interest in joining this committee.

The Assistant Corporation Counsel said that she will circulate the draft website to Mr. Sanchez-Potter and Mr. German and organize a meeting to discuss next steps. She said the first campaign is a heating and cooling campaign.

- DEC Natural Resource Inventory Grant
The Assistant Corporation Counsel reported the next step is a community outreach survey. The Steering Committee is finalizing. The Environmental Justice Fellows will assist.
- EPA Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring for Communities
No update to report.
- Restoration Advisory Board /Stewart Air National Guard Water Project
No update to report
- LWRP Update – Locally Adopted on 7-10-17
No update to report.
- Tree Permit -Local Code Revision.
No update to report.
- Holtech -Radioactive wastewater
No update to report.
- CSX Underpass
The Assistant Corporation Counsel reported that the beautification plan had been reviewed by the CAC and the work has been completed. The Council agreed this item can be removed from the agenda.
- **Calendar of Upcoming events (webinars, training, community events)**
 - 6-07-24 Greater Newburgh Parks Conservancy Stakeholders Meeting
 - 6-10-24 City Council Meeting
 - 6-11-24 Architectural Review Council Meeting
 - 6-18-24 Planning Board Meeting
 - 6-25-24 Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
 - 7-24-24 ReLeaf Conference in Albany, NY

- **Public comment on general CAC non-agenda items:**

Julia Raskin said when the city cleared the landscaping at the People's Park the trees maintained were Ailanthus trees which are invasive and are prone to the spotted lanternfly. She invited the CAC to the Downing Park Olmsted Network Annual Conference, September 13, 2024, 10a.m. to 4p.m. at the Calvary Church.

Chris Knasiak made Motion to Adjourn

Mark Sanchez-Potter seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting concluded 7:52 p.m.