

Monthly Report to LaFayette Town Board

LaFayette Advisory Conservation Commission (LACC)

November 3, 2022

Submitted by: Mark Distler, LACC Chair

These are the LACC activities between October 7 and November 3, 2022:

1. **Membership** – No change.
2. **Meetings** – No meeting was held. Attached is the meeting summary of the last meeting held on September 27. The next meeting is scheduled for November 29.
3. **Projects & Programs** - See attached status summary of projects requested by the Town Supervisor and programs selected to build a community conservation culture. Of note:
 - a. A total of 4 trees and 4 benches have been requested for the Memorial Tree and Bench Program since its launch in August.
 - b. A press release announcing the Town's community solar subscription and savings was reviewed by Town Board and released to the media.
 - c. A new project was started to cover the Clean Energy Community program approved by the Town Board in August. The first activity is to receive formal CEC designation and the \$5k grant from NYSEDA. Follow-on activities are shown in the attached status table.

Attachments: LACC Project Status Summary
LACC 9/27/22 Meeting Summary

LACC Project & Program Status Summary

Projects		Objective	Project Team	Current Actions	Previous Actions
Senior Center		Develop landscaping design that will connect visitors to the nature of Stafford Park	Kelly, Larkin, Mark	ON HOLD -Design ravine landscape & new park plantings in Spring '23	-Met ESF to discuss their involvement -Received Supervisor's and Optimist's approval to proceed w/ ESF -Got construction ROM cost estimates for ravine & nature trail plantings
Parks		Propose concepts to increase visitor's awareness of nature and/or environment	Amy, Keith, Mark, Markus	-Decide on option for Bailey Park	-Developed list of concepts -Finalized list of plantings for ESF by September; involve Optimists & Prince -Drafted tree/bench memorial program -Received Supervisor approval to obtain cost estimates -Worked out transaction details w/ Chartrand & Marzo -Designed tree and bench locations -Obtained latest cost estimates & finalized details -Got program approved by TB -Launched program on website via social media channels
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations		Develop scope & cost for stations on Town property	Mark, Rachel	-Receive additional cost estimate and develop ROI -Submit recommendation for TB approval -If approved, apply for NYSDEC ZEV grant	-Contacted CNYRPDB to learn about funding options -Got Supervisor approval to contact contractors -Met with MakeReady contractor at Town office to start cost estimate process -Discussed concepts with Supervisor -Received cost estimate from MakeReady contractor
Invasives		Propose approaches to manage the risk of invasives in our community	Kelly, Craig	-Remind Optimists to repost wild parsnip posters in parks each Spring -Recommend adding links to invasive educational material and mediation projects on town website.	-Discussed with Supervisor prior to identification -Prepared warning signs for installation at parks -Developed fact sheet -Wrote newsletter article highlighting 3 invasives
Community Solar		Promote NYS Community Solar program with residents	Mark	-Write follow-up newsletter article	-Wrote newsletter article -Obtained cost savings estimate for Town to subscribe to solar project -Recommended 3 opportunities to TB, all approved -Managed Town's subscription to solar project (started monthly savings)
Clean Energy Community		Earn CEC designation under NYSERDA program and encourage energy use reductions	Mark, Amy, Kelly, Payton, Larkin, Keith	-Receive NYSERDA CEC designation & grant -Manage Town's benchmarking setup -Develop community campaign plan for approval -Identify energy reduction for Town's lighting districts' conversion to LED bulbs	-Submitted TB's benchmarking resolution to NYSERDA
Land Use Independent Study (AI 2-1)		Conduct an independent study of regulatory techniques and land use controls to manage future development in order to preserve the Town's public vistas and critical environmental and agricultural areas	Mark, Kelly	-Obtain funding via 2023 budget -Establish review committee -Conduct study -Draft recommendations to TB	-Developed SOW for expert consultant & requested proposals -Received proposal from land use expert
SEQR Enhancement (AI 2-6)		Enhance understanding of the SEQR process by all review boards to protect our natural resources from the potential negative impacts of development	Mark, Kelly, Doug	-Deliver enhancement program to PB	-Evaluated needs by interviewing those conducting SEQR reviews -Developed focused enhancement purpose -Researched enhancement options to meet needs -Recommended enhancement program to Supervisor -Prepared recommendation for program with SMEs -Delivered enhancement program to Town Board & ZBA

UNA & CEA (AI 2-10)	Inventory and identify sensitive environmental areas in the Town and designate Unique Natural Areas (UNAs) or Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs) as defined by the NYSDEC	Mark, Amy, Larkin	-Survey experts & town residents for potential CEAs -Write description & rationale of potential CEAs -Review draft recommendations with review boards -Submit recommendations to TB	-Decided UNAs are the same as CEAs -Drafted initial list -Spoke with NYSDEC
Tree Planting Program (AI 2-12)	Establish a tree planting program for Town-owned properties and public ROWs	Mark, Rachel, Keith, Markus, Doug	-Inventory trees on Town properties -Develop cost estimate for new tree plantings -Research funding availability -Develop tree care program -Submit program recommendation to TB -Implement new tree planting and care program	-Decided to exclude ROWs from program since they are private properties -Identified properties and prepared maps of each

Culture Building Programs

Town Newsletter Articles	Provide communications that increase resident's awareness to nature and environmental conservation	Rotating authors	-Write 1Q article on honey bees, due December -Future topics: glass recycling, invasives	22Q4 - Invasive Species 22Q3 - Community Solar 22Q2 - Solar farm law 22Q1 - People & plastics 21Q4 - LACC update, plastic recycling 21Q3 - LACC update, tick safety
Town Website	Post conservation topics on a LACC web page	Mark	-Continually update content	-Obtained Supervisor & IO approvals -Added existing content to the site page -Monthly updates
NYSACC Newsletter	Write article about LACC for NYSACC's quarterly newsletter	TBD	-Write article about LACC -Take photos of LACC, Bailey Park, Wild Parsnip, Stafford Park tree planting	

Completed Projects (since April 2021)

Agritourism	Recommend approaches to create a Town initiative	Isabella, Larkin, Markus	COMPLETED	-Discussed possible scopes with Supervisor -Discussed possible projects with Palmer & McConnell
Solar Farms	Propose recommendations to revise and update the solar farms law (§290-32 (H))	Carole, Kelly, Doug	COMPLETED	-Researched other towns' guidance -Drafted recommendation edits to current law -Completed internal review -Submitted recommendations memo to Supervisor -Submitted recommended edits to Town Attorney -Present proposed recommendations to Town Board
Comprehensive Plan Goal #2	Lead the execution of the 12 action items listed under Goal #2 of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan	Mark	COMPLETED	-Prepared plan to complete Goal #2 action items -Identified volunteers and subject matter experts needed to conduct 5 action items for 2022 -Held kickoff meetings
Comprehensive Plan Update	Participate on Tiger Team to update 2012 Comprehensive Plan	Carole, Kelly, Mark	COMPLETED	-Submitted input on vision, goals, objectives, action items -Provided input on land use approaches -Wrote FAQs for public communication -Prepared for public open house & hearing (10/28) -Provided input on revisions to CP based on public input -Define and organize the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC)
Bailey Park Tree Planting	Coordinate planting of trees at Bailey Park to replace those removed	Amy, Mark	COMPLETED	-Obtained cost quote to plant 5 trees -Received Supervisor's approval -Coordinated planting & residents' donation
Apple Valley Park Noise	Provide technical support of noise & noise ordinance	Mark	COMPLETED	-Conducted noise evaluation during concert, submitted report -Recommended revisions to noise ordinance



LaFayette Advisory Conservation Commission

Meeting Summary – September 27, 2022

Attendees

Mark Distler, Chair
Amy Roe
Doug Anderson

Craig Archer
Payton Kremers
Kelly Wypych

Keith Terrell
Larkin Podsiedlik
Markus Schaub

Introductions

Payton Kremers, as new student member, introduced himself and all other attendees introduced themselves. Craig Archer led a safety moment about ladder safety.

Projects & Programs

Each of the LACC's projects and programs were discussed, as shown in the attached status summary. Below are some of the highlights:

Senior Center – On hold

Parks – Mark Distler said the memorial tree & bench program was released online in mid-August, and since then there were sponsorship requests for 3 trees and 1 bench. Amy Roe explained the upgrades constructed earlier this year at Bailey Park.

EVCS – Mark said he received a quote from the EVCS contractor after a 9-month process. The total cost was \$450k, including \$77k match from Town. He said he was working on a ROI analysis and will get a second quote. He said he recommended the cost in next year's Town budget but thinks we need a completed ROI that we can be confident. He said we need to find and talk with a municipality that has pay-for-use DCFC (fast charge) before we decide to recommend for next year's budget.

Invasive & Hazardous Plants – Kelly Wypych talked about the article she wrote for the Q4 town newsletter. She said the article asked for volunteers to get involved. There was some discussion about identifying focused projects for volunteers via coordination with organizations who identify & mitigate invasives. Kelly said she will provide iMapInvasives webinar or in person training to residents interested in getting involved with this program.

Community Solar – Mark said the Town Board approved a community solar subscription for all of its eligible electric accounts, which is estimated to save \$4.7k each year. He said the Town Board also approved a carbon footprint benchmarking program and community campaign, and it's time to start working on them. He asked for volunteers to help on a campaign scoping document. Volunteers were: Kelly, Amy Roe, Payton Kremers, Larkin Podsiedlik, and Keith Terrell. Mark said that these programs will earn the Town designation as a Clean Energy Community (via NYSERDA), in addition to a \$5k grant to be used on energy reduction projects.

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Land Use Independent Study – Mark and Kelly said they received one proposal from a consultant for the study. Three other consultants declined to propose. Mark said he put the cost in the 2023 Town preliminary budget. He mentioned that it may not make it in the final budget given the Town budget is expected to be over the 2% cap.

Enhancement of SEQR – Mark, Kelly and Doug explained how they managed to specify what should be considered as “enhancement” use of SEQRs conducting by the three Town boards. They reported that the Town Attorney and Town Engineer conducted a 20-minute training session with the Town Board and were scheduled to do the same for the Zoning Board of Appeals following the meeting.

CEAs – Amy, Mark and Larkin explained the current activity is to talk with local subject matter experts to ask for input on a draft list of CEAs for the Town. Amy talked about the experts she had recently spoken with. Mark explained how CEAs are used in evaluating new development proposals and how important resident communication and education would be the more critical step in this project.

Tree Planting Program – Rachel, Doug, Mark, Markus, and Keith currently surveying Town properties and developing recommendations for removal, pruning and planting.

Newsletter article – Mark asked for ideas for the 1Q23 newsletter article. Suggestions included invasives, honey bees, and home composting.

New Business

Honey Bees – Payton provided a technical presentation on honey bees, including the threats they face and what humans can do to help them thrive.

Next Meeting

November 29, 5:00-6:30 PM, Community Room