

Monthly Report to LaFayette Town Board

LaFayette Advisory Conservation Commission (LACC)

February 9, 2023

Submitted by: Mark Distler, LACC Chair

These are the LACC activities between January 6 and February 9, 2023:

1. **Membership** – Darcy Sachs has volunteered her time and talent with the LACC for a 2-year term. Since the LACC is at its maximum number of board-appointed members, she will be designated as an auxiliary member, and therefore her membership does not require Town Board appointment. We have two other auxiliary members.
2. **Meetings** – No meeting was held. The next one is scheduled for February 21.
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. **CEC Grant:** As approved in January, the application was submitted for a \$5,000 grant that the Town recently earned by its designation as a Clean Energy Community. The grant was approved and the Town received the check on February 3. As a reminder, the grant was approved to be used to pay the Town's share of the LED street light conversion project. As a reminder, the Codes Department completed two of the four activities required for CEC designation.
 - b. **LED Conversion:** A survey of the Town's street lights was completed to determine if wattage changes are warranted. None were, but several lights were found not functioning, and some intersections did not have lights. As approved in January, the request letter was submitted to National Grid to proceed with the LED conversion.
 - c. **Tree Planting:** The Optimists and LACC are planning an Arbor Day celebration at Stafford Park on April 22 consisting of tree planting and park cleanup. In addition to the four memorial trees slated to be planted, Cornell Cooperative Extension is contributing trees. We will start getting the word out in early March for community participation. The LACC is considering a possible future recommendation for the Town to meet the designation requirements of a Tree City USA community. Shortly, we will be requesting your approval, via email, to submit a grant application to New York State Urban Forestry Council for a \$1k grant to fund the Arbor Day celebration.
 - d. **Community Solar Campaign:** The response rate to the community solar campaign has been excellent, higher than the broker has seen before. As of February 2, 240 subscriptions have been completed (others in process). The campaign met its goal early in the campaign, so we submitted documentation to NYSERDA and received 200 points toward earning the next CEC grant. A campaign webinar is planned for February 28, and a postcard about it is expected to arrive in all residents' mail on or about February 18. A presentation about the community solar opportunity was made to the Optimists club on January 19. As a reminder, the campaign ends at the end of March.

Attachments: LACC Project Status Summary

LACC Project & Program Status Summary

Projects	Objective	Project Team	Current Actions	Previous Actions
Parks	Propose concepts to increase visitor's awareness of nature and/or environment	Amy, Keith, Mark, Markus	-Develop a memorial tree and bench program 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, Kelly	-Request other cost estimates -Develop ROI with input from other pay-4-use -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 -Add links to invasive educational material and remediation 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, Amy, Kelly, Payton, Larkin, Keith	-Track new subscriptions -Hold webinar on February 28	-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) -Developed community campaign plan for TB & NYSERDA approval -Launched campaign -Submitted documentation to NYSERDA & receive more grant points -Presented at local group meeting
Clean Energy Community*	Earn CEC designation under NYSERDA program and recommend energy reduction projects	Mark, Craig	-Implement LED conversion project & track savings -Manage Town's benchmarking setup -Estimate costs to include roadside placards	-Submitted TB's benchmarking resolution to NYSERDA -Received NYSERDA CEC designation & \$5k grant -Identified cost & energy saving for Town's street lighting conversion to LED -Recommended street lighting LED conversion for TB approval -Applied for & received \$5k CEC grant to cover LED conversion cost
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 2024 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 -Spoke with some experts about potential CEAs

Tree Planting Program (AI 2-12)	Establish a tree planting program for Town-owned properties and public ROWS	Mark, Darcy, Doug, Keith, Markus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inventory trees on Town properties -Develop cost estimate for new tree plantings -Organize Arbor Day celebration during Stafford plantings for April 22 -Consider application for Tree City USA designation -Develop tree care program -Submit program recommendation to TB -Implement new tree planting and care program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Decided to exclude ROWs from program since they are private properties -Identified properties and prepared maps of each
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Culture Building Programs

Town Newsletter Articles	Provide communications that increase resident's awareness to nature and environmental conservation	Rotating authors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Write 23Q2 article on honey bees, due March 6 -Future topics: invasives, glass recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23Q1 - Community solar campaign 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conducted noise evaluation during concert, submitted report -Recommended revisions to noise ordinance
Senior Center	Develop landscaping design that will connect visitors to the nature of Stafford Park	Kelly, Larkin, Mark	ON HOLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -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