

TOWN OF WOODSTOCK ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

45 Comeau Drive, Woodstock, NY 12498

Susan M. Paynter, Chair
Arlene Weissman, Vice-Chair
Julia Blelock
Laurie Kirby
Evan Neumann
Joe Otters
Kenneth Panza, Secretary

The Open Meetings Law requires: Minutes of meetings of all public bodies shall be available to the public in accordance with the provisions of the freedom of information law within two weeks from the date of such meeting except that minutes taken pursuant to subdivision two of this section shall be available to the public within one week from the date of the executive session.

Minutes for the Meeting of January 7, 2026

Call to Order

A quorum being present, WEC Acting Chair Julia Blelock called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

WEC Members Present

Julia Blelock	Term: expires 12/31/2026
Laurie Kirby	Term: expires 12/31/2026
Evan Neumann	Term: expires 12/31/2026
Joe Otters	Term: expires 12/31/2026
Kenneth Panza, Secretary	Term: expires 12/31/2026

Guests Present

Andy Bicking, Director
Ulster County Department of the Environment
Brendan Walsh, Environmental Outreach Manager
Ulster County Department of the Environment
Mary Lambert, Climate Action Planning Manager
Landfill Biofilter Project Manager
Hudson Valley Regional Council
Dr. Sehrish Asghar, Environmental Scientist
Hudson Valley Regional Council
Erin Moran, Coordinator
Woodstock Climate Smart Task Force
Jay Decker, Complete Streets Committee
Laura Ricci, Councilwoman

Marcel Nagele,
Woodstockers United for Change
DWSP2 Working Group

Vincent Mow,
Woodstockers United for Change

Dr. Keisha Hoerrner,
Communications & Outreach Manager,
Woodstock Land Conservancy

Approval of the Agenda

Agenda, as modified, approved by unanimous consent.

Consideration of Minutes

Minutes for the WEC meeting of December 3, 2025, previously updated and distributed, were approved by unanimous consent.

Correction to the Minutes of December 3, 2025

Chair noted the December 3, 2025 meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

An archive of 2025 WEC meeting minutes is available on Google Drive and can be accessed at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/17fj4IKp27H6kxnmBjSstgTxoikIVZ42d?usp=sharing>

WEC Officers for 2026

Officers appointed for the year 2026: Susan Paynter, Chair; Arlene Weissman, Vice-Chair; Kenneth Panza, Secretary.

Correspondence

None received

Announcements

Complete Streets Committee Receives \$46,567 Grant

December 23, 2025, Governor Hochul Announces \$463 Million Awarded Statewide Through Regional Economic Development Council Initiative. Woodstock received a \$46,567 grant to develop a "Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan"

"The town of Woodstock will develop a comprehensive bike and pedestrian master plan covering the hamlet center and extending westward toward the hamlet of Bearsville. The study will assess current infrastructure conditions, identify barriers to safe and accessible non-motorized travel, and develop a strategic plan to improve walkability, bikeability, and multimodal circulation."

Invited Guest Speakers

Ulster County Department of the Environment

Andy Bicking, Director, Ulster County Department of Environment was appointed **director** in September. Prior, Andy served as Executive Director of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, where he oversaw statewide conservation programs, public communications, and advocacy efforts. Before that, he spent more than two decades with Scenic Hudson, where he held

multiple leadership roles, including Director of Government Relations & Public Policy, and spearheading major legislative campaigns and regional planning initiatives.

At the recent meeting of the Ulster County Environmental Management Council (EMC), Andy mentioned that he would like to visit the county's environmental councils. I suggested that Woodstock would welcome him at one of our meetings. The Chair invited Andy to attend WEC's January 7 meeting.

Accompanying Andy at the WEC meeting was **Brendan Walsh, Environmental Outreach Manager, Department of the Environment**. Brendan is a recent graduate of the Bard Center for Environmental Policy with a Masters in Science of Environmental Policy.

The Ulster County Department of the Environment has seven full time staff members plus authorization for interns. Andy summarized the three main focus areas for the department:

1. **Implementing Executive Order #1 of January 30, 2023.** Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger signed an Executive Order creating a climate agenda for Ulster County Government. The fourteen directives in the Order align Ulster County Government with the targets of New York State's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).
2. **Watershed Management.** Managing the MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) requirements and process, hosting the county's Water Quality Coordinating Committee, and supporting the local stream management plans for the Lower Esopus, Rondout, and Wallkill watersheds.
3. **Administration of Climate Initiatives,** such as Green the Fair, composting, and winterization programs.

Andy outlined a series of initiatives and local laws implementing Executive Order #1 of 2023, include greening the county fleet, benchmarking building efficiency, determining the county green house gas inventory (GHG) and a climate action plan. As a state senator, County Executive Metzger was largely responsible for the state Legislature's 2019 adoption of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.

The department is responsible for the County's Climate Smart submissions. Ulster County was the first county to achieve Silver Certification, and the department is responsible for achieving silver recertification.

Woodstock Supervisor, Bill McKenna, asked how Woodstock's climate agenda compares to the County's directive. The following link is the comparison provided to the Supervisor about Woodstock's accomplishments for some of the major elements in the County's Executive Order. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-ufhWmpAizLINF_VCnnVxd5ajgP6SwTe/view?usp=sharing

Each year, the Ulster County Department of the Environment sponsors a meeting for the county's environmental and conservation commissions to share their accomplishments and plans. For the past three years, the meeting focused on town environmental activities and Climate Smart program accomplishments. This year the focus was on watersheds.

The Lower Esopus Stream Management Plan (SMP), published in early summer of 2024, was created to address issues along the 32-mile extent of the Esopus creek resulting from releases of muddy water from the Ashokan Reservoir. Funds from New York City DEP, state, and local resources will be used to fund the plan's recommendations. In addition to the Lower Esopus,

comprehensive stream management programs have been prepared for the Rondout and Wallkill creeks.

Ella Cattabiani recently joined the department as Watersheds Coordinator and will lead the county's participation in the Lower Esopus Stream Management Program. In addition to the Lower Esopus, comprehensive stream management programs have been prepared for the Rondout and Wallkill creeks, and the county's watershed manager will be responsible for working with these watershed groups.

Brendan Walsh, Environmental Outreach Manager, discussed his role relating to local Conservation Advisory Boards and Environmental Commissions, including the Ulster County Environmental Management Council. Brendan also discussed the Ulster County air quality program, managed in cooperation with Bard's Community Sciences Lab. For the past five years, Bard's Community Sciences Lab has been monitoring Kingston's air from the top of the Andy Murphy Neighborhood Center on Broadway, and it's now part of a broader effort by Bard to ramp up air monitoring in the Hudson Valley, called the "Hudson Valley Community Air Network."

The Woodstock Library has an air quality sensor installed and is a participant in the air quality network.

Hudson Valley Regional Council – Biofilter Program

Mary Lambert, Climate Action Planning Manager, Hudson Valley Regional Council Manager for HVRC's Landfill Biofilters Project

Ms. Lambert previously served on the Hastings-on-Hudson Board of Trustees, as the Co-Chair of the Hastings Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Task Force, and as a member of the Hastings Conservation Commission. Ms. Lambert received a master's degree in Business Administration from Columbia University and her bachelor's degree in American Studies from Yale University.

Dr. Sehrish Asghar, Environmental Scientist, Hudson Valley Regional Council

Dr. Asghar joined HVRC in 2025. She is an Environmental Scientist working on HVRC's landfill biofilters project. In this role, she oversees the design and deployment of biofilter systems to mitigate methane from closed landfills, advancing low-cost, natural solutions for greenhouse gas reductions. Dr. Asghar earned her Ph.D. in Environmental Science from the University of Idaho where her research focused on optimizing sequencing batch reactors for nutrient removal from dairy manure. She also holds a Master of Philosophy in Microbiology from Quaid-i-Azam University, Pakistan.

Biofilters are a reliable and cost-effective solution for reducing landfill gas (LFG) emissions by utilizing methanotrophs, specialized bacteria capable of converting landfill methane to less harmful gases. The Woodstock landfill is a candidate site.

The biofilter project was reintroduced at the May 28, 2025, meeting of the Ulster County Environmental Council by Mary Lambert. In early September, 2025, Mary Lambert reached out to the supervisor to initiate Woodstock's participation in the landfill project.

The Hudson Valley Regional Council (HVRC) comprises the seven Mid-Hudson region counties: Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester. Established in 1977, under New York's General Municipal Law (Article 5-G), as a voluntary association of county governments, it's one of many regional planning/coordination organizations in New York that address issues that go beyond one town or county.

HVRC secured a \$3 million grant to mitigate methane emissions at Mid-Hudson landfills, which went under contract and kicked off on November 1, 2024. The goal of the project is to install biofilters to reduce methane emissions at 14 closed landfills in municipalities in the Mid-Hudson Region. The Woodstock landfill is a candidate site.

Biofilters are a reliable and cost-effective solution for reducing landfill gas (LFG) emissions by utilizing methanotrophs, specialized bacteria capable of converting landfill methane to less harmful gases.

Methanotrophs are aerobic microorganisms that use methane as their sole source of carbon and energy, synthesizing all cellular carbon-containing molecules from it. They are primarily classified as Gram-negative bacteria and contain the enzyme methane monooxygenase, which enables them to oxidize methane and participate in biocatalysis and bioremediation processes.

AI generated definition based on: Encyclopedia of Microbiology (Third Edition), 2009

Biofilters and biocovers are passive methods of mitigating landfill gas (LFG) emissions

A biofilter consists of a porous material layer as well as an organic material (often compost) layer to oxidize methane in LFG. A flexible tube or similar conveyance connects the gas vent to the biofilter to route the LFG. The biofilter may be enclosed in a container and may have a cover to prevent precipitation from entering the filter. Biofilters may be installed on a landfill without an active gas collection system (GCS) and could also be installed in areas of a landfill that are no longer connected to an active GCS.

A biocover is a porous material layer laid directly on top of a landfill which is then covered by an oxidizing layer of mature compost. Fugitive LFG filters through the cover and is oxidized. Biocovers may be used as a stand-alone technology or in combination with an active GCS. Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Potential:



- Methane routed through a biofilter can be oxidized at a rate of up to 19 percent. The oxidation rate depends heavily on biofilter design but also other factors such as air temperature.
- In addition to gas routed directly through a biofilter, some methane may be oxidized depending on cover type. For landfills without an active gas collection system, methane oxidation rates range from 10 percent in areas without final cover to 35 percent in areas with final cover.
- A well-made biocover employing a large volume of aged compost can oxidize up to 35 or 40 percent of the methane in the gas passing through it. The oxidation rate is not constant and depends on the physical and biological characteristics of the filter material such as moisture, density and organic content as well as environmental factors such as air temperature.

Landfill Biofilter Program Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Last year, the town board considered the landfill biofilter MOU, but decided to postpone consideration until the new administration was installed in 2026. Laura Rici, town board liaison to the environmental commission, will brief the supervisor on the characteristics of the program and recommend that the MOU be signed. Mary Lambert has agreed to brief the town board and answer any questions.

Woodstock Climate Smart Program

Erin Moran, Coordinator, Woodstock Climate Smart Task Force

Jay Decker, Complete Streets Committee

Erin was invited to address the WEC to inform the new members about Woodstock's participation in DEC's Climate Smart Communities Program. Climate Smart Communities (CSC) is a voluntary New York State program to help local governments reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate. The program offers technical assistance, grants, and rebates for electric vehicles.

By town board resolution in June 2016, Woodstock adopted the CSC pledge to join the CSC program and become a Registered Climate Smart Community. On January 7, 2020, by town board Resolution, Erin Moran was appointed Coordinator for the Woodstock Climate Smart Task Force.

Erin's presentation described how Woodstock achieved Bronze Certification in 2020 and Bronze recertification in September 2021. Bronze certification is valid for five years, and Woodstock's certification is scheduled to expire on September 30, 2026. In order to avoid cancellation, a complete update to Woodstock's Climate Smart Application must be submitted to the CSC program administrators by May 22, 2026, about four months away from this meeting. Erin outlined some of the actions needed to submit the CSC application update.

Outstanding Projects with CSC 2025

Erin provided a list of current climate smart projects.

Complete Streets Committee, Schoonmaker Lane to Bearsville Bike Path

WEC has met with complete streets and tree committees to review the environmental implications of this project. Complete Streets just received a \$46,567 grant to develop a comprehensive bike and pedestrian master plan covering the hamlet center and extending westward toward the hamlet of Bearsville.

Solar Installation at West Saugerties Road Landfill

Apparently a lot of work has already gone into designing a PV solar installation for the closed Woodstock landfill, but WEC has received no documentation on this project. It's not clear WEC is capable of managing a project of this scale and complexity.

Earth Day – an ongoing annual event hosted by WEC.

Repair Café – WEC met with Carolyn Ritchie and arrangements have been finalized for 2026.

DWSP2 – Ongoing WEC project, not clear about climate smart involvement.

Community/ Youth Center / Pool & Recreation

In 2021, WEC initiated an assessment of the Woodstock Youth Center to identify issues of energy efficiency, indoor air quality, and problems such as moisture incursion, etc. A final report was

delivered in July 2021. The Supervisor reported that some urgent repairs had been completed, but that no decision about repairing or replacing the building had been made. The town was committed to renovation of the town offices, and wouldn't consider substantial work on the youth center until after that project is completed.

Library Heat Emergency & Cooling Centers

Unclear the status of this project or if it involves WEC?

For the most part, except for the solar landfill proposal, WEC is actively engaged with the open and active CSC projects.

Preliminaries

Woodstock's planning for climate change began with Al Gore's 2006 documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, a film about the threat of climate change – its causes, effects, history, and potential solutions. The film concludes with Gore addressing common misconceptions surrounding global warming and challenging viewers to bring about needed changes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Woodstock Environmental Commission accepted this challenge. On March 13, 2007, the Woodstock Town Board adopted the Carbon Neutral Resolution, committing that town governmental operations would be carbon neutral by year-end 2017.

In 2009, the Woodstock Environmental Commission released the 'Green Guide' providing recommendations and identifying resources for achieving sustainability. The guide was designed to complement the town's carbon neutral initiative, to illustrate the holistic nature of the initiative, and identify actions that would contribute to the town's carbon neutral goal.

At the time, the Carbon Neutral Resolution was an audacious statement. There was little understanding about how carbon neutrality could be achieved, but by 2015, Woodstock achieved carbon neutrality and was formally recognized for its accomplishment at the 2017 annual meeting of the New York State Association of Conservation Commissions.

The Woodstock Town Board adopted the Climate Smart Communities Pledge at its June 21, 2016 meeting. Woodstock's updated comprehensive plan, adopted November 20, 2018, assigned the responsibility for the Climate Smart Communities initiative to the Environmental Commission, and on October 15, 2019, Woodstock Supervisor Bill McKenna established the Climate Smart Community Task Force with the Environmental Commission as its core group.

Considering the amount of climate work the town had completed, we thought complying with Climate Smart requirements for Bronze Level certification would be straightforward. Not a chance. Unknown was the extraordinary demand for documentation and adherence to technical standards beyond municipal convention required by the Climate Smart Program. Obtaining documentation for completed work was a major challenge, but in September 2020, Woodstock was certified Climate Smart Bronze.

Achieving a forty percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is an established New York climate objective, and Climate Smart Action Item PE12 awards points for reductions in emissions from municipal facilities. Woodstock submitted documentation showing that between 2011 and 2019, greenhouse gas emissions from Woodstock's governmental operations were reduced by 95.9 metric tons CO₂e, or 41.2%. At this time, Woodstock is the only Climate Smart community that has been recognized for achieving the 40% reduction in GHG emissions. On September 25, 2021, Woodstock was recertified Bronze with 220 points earned from 21 completed actions.

Old Business

Letter endorsing the undesignated rail segment for trail use only

Not considered. Several commissioners had not seen the draft letter. Also, the county legislature is reorganizing, and the appropriate trail committee has not yet been reappointed. Consideration of the trail letter will be taken up at WEC's January 21 meeting.

Review of Public Environmental Priorities Outreach Survey

Evan Neumann distributed a statistical summary of the responses to WEC's outreach survey. It's unclear if the results are useful for establishing environmental priorities. Discussion of the survey results and prioritized list of objectives and action plans will continue at WEC's January 21 meeting. A document summarizing the results of the WEC 2025 survey on environmental issues facing the town of Woodstock is attached to these minutes.

Please note that the survey had only 26 respondents. Further only 15 of the 26 understood the format of the questions well enough to grade their replies correctly. It's my opinion that due to the small sample size, the results of this survey do not constitute a mandate to prioritize these issues in any hierarchical order. Perhaps a survey structured in a different way with a wider distribution could be helpful to guide the WEC. We can certainly make another improved effort. We did collect contact information for most of the respondents, so we can reach out if and when we have initiatives in their field of interest.

New Business

Update on Terramor property – Susan M. Paynter

Topic postponed. Susan was not in attendance.

Earth Day

No discussion. Patrick Acker, Youth Center Recreation Director, agreed to call Susan Paynter to discuss youth center participation.

WEC/WLC Collaboration

"WLC drinkable rivers" refers to the Woodstock Land Conservancy's 2026 program, "Ecologies of Water," featuring the book *Drinkable Rivers* by Li An Phoa and Maarten Van Der Schaaf, which promotes awareness and action for healthy waterways through events, workshops, and citizen science, connecting local water health to global efforts for clean, living rivers.

The DWSP2 working group agreed to make a brief (10-to-15-minute) presentation, in conjunction with the Woodstock Environmental Commission at the WLC event, "How Is the Sawkill?" on Saturday, March 14, from 5 to 7:30 PM at Mountainview Studios. DWSP2 will co-host a table with WEC.

Public be Heard

Adjournment

Next scheduled WEC Meeting,
Wednesday, January 21, 6:00 PM,
Comeau Great Room

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth S. Panza, Secretary
Woodstock Environmental Commission

Attachment - Statistical Summary of Responses to WEC Outreach Survey

Other Meeting Announcements

Monday, Jan. 26, 7 to 9 pm, "Our Blue World: A Water Odyssey"

Woodstock Land Conservancy is partnering with Woodstock NY Transition and Woodstock Jewish Congregation to host the 2026 Film and Discussion Series. The first event will be held Jan. 26 from 7-9 p.m. with a free screening of "Our Blue World: A Water Odyssey". Attend in person at the Woodstock Jewish Congregation or through Zoom.

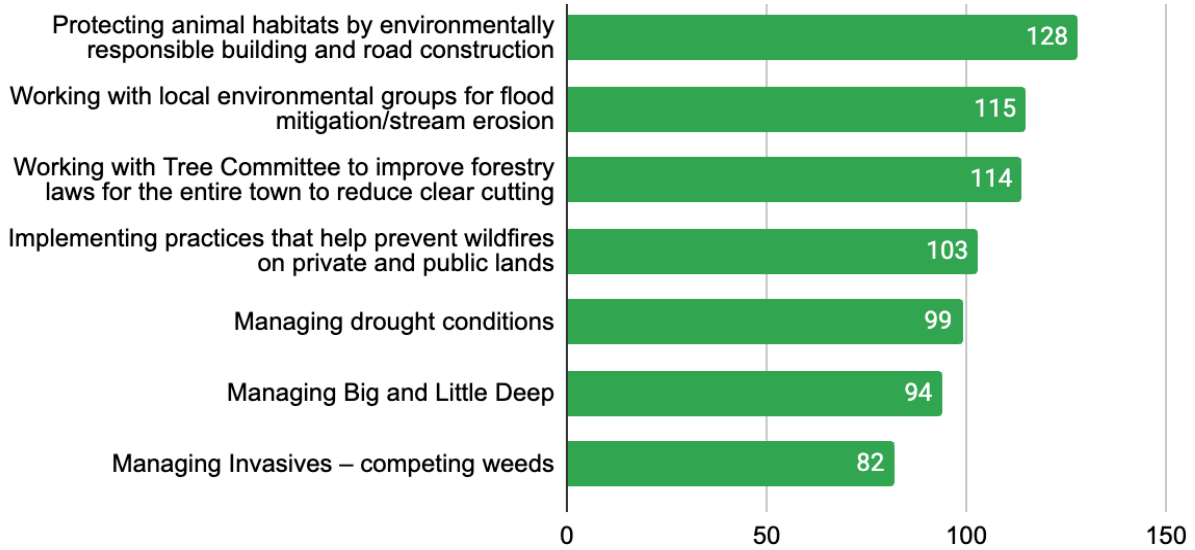
[Reservations required for Zoom.](#)

Saturday, March 14, 5 to 7:30 pm at Mountainview Studios, "How is the Sawkill?"

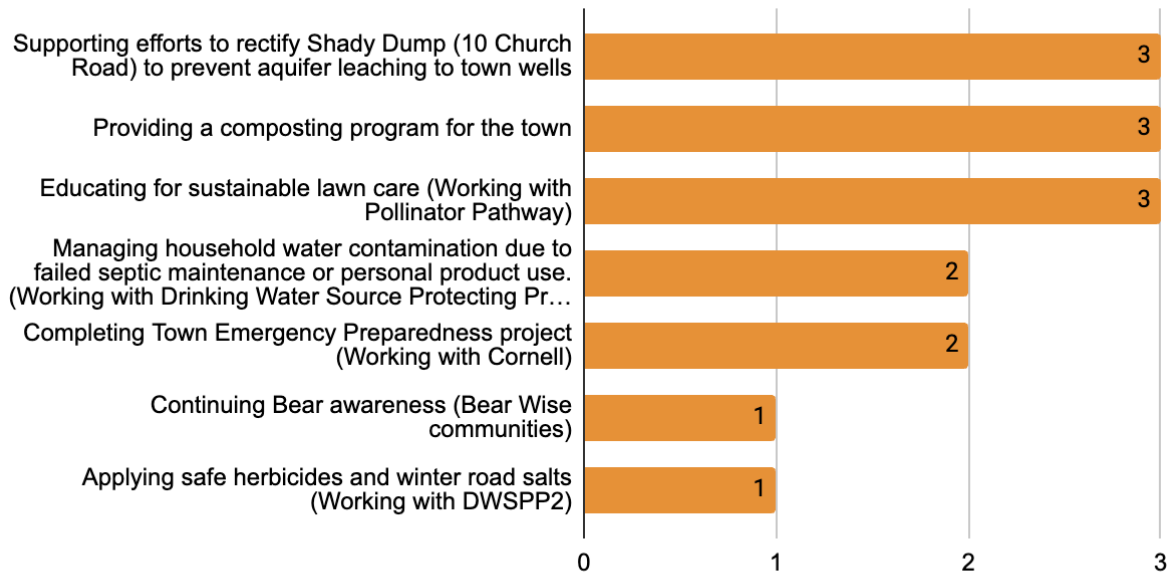
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Priorities

When scoring, priorities with ranking 1 received 7 points, and 7 received 1 point. The highest priorities were:



Volunteer for Causes



Would Like More Info

