

TOWN OF WOODSTOCK ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

45 Comeau Drive, Woodstock, NY 12498

Susan M. Paynter, Chair
Arlene Weissman, Vice-Chair
Stacey Anderson
Laurie Kirby
Evan Neumann
Joe Otters
Kenneth Panza

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 November 5, 2025

5:30 pm at the Community Center

The Nov. 5th WEC meeting was moved to the Community Center and started a half-hour earlier to accommodate the town's budget hearing, which begins at 6:00 PM at Comeau.

Call to Order

A quorum being present, WEC Chair Susan Paynter called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

WEC Members Present

Susan M. Paynter, Chair	Term: expires 12/31/2025
Arlene Weissman, Vice-Chair	Term: expires 12/31/2025
Stacey Anderson	Term: expires 12/31/2025
Laurie Kirby	Term: expires 12/31/2025
Joe Otters	Term: expires 12/31/2026
Kenneth Panza	Term: expires 12/31/2025

Guests Present

Marcel Nagele,
Woodstockers United for Change
Lizzie Vann, Bearsville Center
Sarah Yanosh

Approval of the Agenda

Agenda, as modified, approved by unanimous consent.

Consideration of Minutes

Minutes for the WEC meeting of October 15, 2025, previously updated and distributed, were approved by unanimous consent.

Correspondence

Email received from **Damon Metzner** responding to DEC action naming the Ulster Planning Board as the lead agency for Zena Development SEQRA review.

Received notice from **Carol March** about petitions being circulated in opposition to Zena Development.

Announcements

Flood Risk, Maps & Requirements: A Primer for Board Members in the Ashokan Reservoir Watershed. Designed specifically for Town Boards, Planning Boards and Zoning Boards in the Ashokan Reservoir Watershed. This event will be held in-person, December 4, 2025, at the American Legion Hall, located at 28 Mountain Road, Shokan, NY 12481. The training is expected to last approximately 2.5 hours.

Registration for this event is required.

DEC Announces \$4 Million in Grants Available to Address Invasive Species Impacts

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Amanda Lefton announced approximately \$4 million is now available to advance projects across the state that help prevent, detect, respond to, and restore sites impacted by invasive species.

Priority will be given to projects that include opportunities for public participation, are on or close to public lands or waterbodies, and incorporate strategies that help ensure long-term success. For full details about the grant opportunity including eligible projects and scoring criteria, visit the Invasive Species Grant Program page on DEC's website.

Invited Guest Speaker

Erin Moran, Woodstock's Climate Smart Task Force Coordinator, to update WEC on Climate Smart activities. Erin was unable to attend tonight's meeting.

Old Business

Comeau Pollinator Garden - Joe Otters

The Woodstock Pollinator Pathway (WPP) received permission from the Town of Woodstock to design, install and maintain a pollinator friendly garden in a sunny 50 x 100-foot graded area beside the new wing of the Town offices. Designed by WPP member and horticulturist Cindy Muro, the garden will showcase the beauty and benefits of a pollinator-friendly garden.

On Sunday, November 2, with the help of a dozen volunteers, the first phase of the pollinator garden was completed. Removal of hay and weeds proceeded the spreading of 7 cubic yards of compost. Cindy Muro, WPP horticulturalist, donated about \$1,000 worth of seeds, which were distributed in accordance with Cindy's garden design.



Comeau Pollinator Garden Envisioned

There were about 25 varieties of native flower seeds, including two types of asters, coneflower, Joe Pye Weed, and mountain mint. Five bales of straw were then spread across the seeded area.

(Straw was used for cover instead of hay, which contains seed that would contaminate the garden.)

The work was completed in about four hours.

A \$1,000 in donations covered the cost of compost, straw, a Por-To-San and lunch for the volunteers. Additional funds will be needed to cover the cost of fencing to protect the garden from the deer.

Report from the Nov. 1st Repair Café

Polly Howells, Woodstock Transition's gatekeeper at the Repair Café, reported 111 items were submitted for repair.

Resolution to Renew Support of Repair Café - Susan Paynter, Chair

In discussion with the Town Clerk, it was decided that beyond the Chair confirming Repair Café is a WEC sponsored event, no further action is required. The dates in the community center for the Repair Café have been reserved.

Report from CERM Conference, October 22 & 23 - Ken Panza & Arlene Weissman

Arlene Weissman and Ken Panza reviewed their impressions from the 2025 CERM conference

CERM, the Catskill Environmental Research & Monitoring Conference was held October 22-24, 2025. The conference was first convened in 2010 by government agencies, university, and non-profit partners that continue as conference conveners.

The purpose of the CERM conference is to: (1) Highlight environmental research and monitoring efforts related to the Catskill Mountains; (2) Bring together a diverse interdisciplinary group of researchers, students, resource managers and others interested in the Catskills; (3) Explore the impacts of environmental stressors on water quality, biodiversity, and ecosystem health; and (4) Stimulate discussion and promote collaborative efforts that address data gaps and environmental issues affecting the region.

Typically, the first day of the conference is focused on issues related to the forests, while the second day focuses on water quality. The impact of climate change on forests was a major theme this year's conference, and stream turbidity and dissolved organic carbon (DOC) in New York City's water supply reservoirs was a continuing theme.

Response to Shady Dump/Budget Surplus Letter - Laurie Kirby

At its October 15, 2025 meeting, WEC approved sending a letter to the town board recommending that part of the town’s budget surplus be reserved in anticipation of remediation of the Shady Dump/10 Church Road site. At its October 28 meeting, the town board agreed to reserve a significant portion of its budget surplus.

Resolution Recommending Remediation of the Shady Dump/10 Church Road Site

The WEC reviewed a draft of a letter to the Town Board recommending remediation of approximately 200 truckloads of contaminated material located at 10 Church Road. Qualified hydrologists have advised the town that contaminants in the material will leach directly into the town’s water aquifer and neighboring private wells.

Resolution: The Woodstock Environmental Commission hereby advises the Woodstock Town Board there is an urgent need to mitigate the threat to the town’s aquifer by removal of all offending material from 10 Church Road.

Resolution introduced by Susan Paynter, Chair; Seconded by Arlene Weissman, Vice-Chair

	Voted Affirmative	Voted Opposing	Abstain	Absent
Susan M. Paynter, Chair	X			
Arlene Weissman, Vice-Chair	X			
Stacey Anderson	X			
Laurie Kirby	X			
Evan Neumann				X
Joe Otters	X			
Kenneth Panza	X			

The resolution is adopted: 6 in favor; 1 absent. The Chair is instructed to forward the approved letter to the Town Board for its consideration.

Perspective on Town of Ulster BESS - Ken Panza

Terra-Gen, a company partially owned by UAE-based Masdar, is proposing to tear down the former Coleman Catholic High School and construct a 250-megawatt lithium-ion battery facility (BESS). During its May 15 meeting, the Ulster Town Board declared its intention to be the lead agency for the project.

The site plan calls for construction of a substation on the east side of the property about 22 feet from a residential property, a 30,000-gallon water storage tank with a fire command center near Hurley Avenue, a 10,000-gallon water storage tank in the middle of the property, a 5,000-gallon underground storage tank in an unidentified location, and approximately 300 industrial lithium-ion batteries in 14-foot tall containers covering nearly 12-acres of the 15-acre property. A 0.3-mile,

above ground, high-voltage transmission line and fiber optic cable will be constructed from the project to the existing Central Hudson transmission lines at the Hurley Substation.

The justifications offered that the proposed Town of Ulster bulk storage facility is necessary to support New York’s transition to renewable energy and that it is safe enough to be located in a dense, residential neighborhood are, at best, misguided and misleading.

The Public Service Commission, after an exhaustive review and comments, issued a Roadmap to install 6 GW of energy storage by 2030. The Roadmap identified two principal applications for bulk storage: The replacement of peaker power plants in New York City and the integration of solar and wind generation. The Town of Ulster proposed battery facility fails to satisfy the parameters established by New York’s energy storage Roadmap. It will neither reduce peaker plant emissions nor integrate renewable energy generation into the grid. It makes no obvious contribution to New York’s renewable energy transition.

Lithium-ion batteries have a well documented history of spontaneously bursting into flames, and can generate significant gaseous and particulate emissions when they experience thermal failure, through venting, thermal runaway, fire and explosion. Lithium-ion batteries cannot be extinguished with water or chemical flame retardants; in both cases, they must burn themselves out while ejecting toxins. The inability to extinguish these fires is especially concerning in BESS installations, where there are hundreds of batteries in proximity to one another within each BESS container.



Typical 14-ft high BLSS Battery Containers

The Ulster Town Board declared that the planned 250-megawatt lithium-ion battery plant at the site of the former Coleman High School could have adverse impacts on the environment, allowing residents an opportunity to seek answers to any potential problems. Public input is considered part of the official SEQRA record and is used by the lead agency to prepare the final EIS and make a final decision. WEC has an opportunity to participate in the Town of Ulster SEQRA review of the BLSS proposal.

New Business

HVRC Landfill Biofilter proposal - Ken Panza

The Hudson Valley Regional Council (HVRC) secured a \$3 million grant to mitigate methane emissions at Mid-Hudson landfills, a program which got under contract and kicked off on November 1, 2024. The goal is to install biofilters to reduce methane emissions at 14 closed landfills in municipalities in the Mid-Hudson Region. 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 town board, at its November 5 meeting, will consider Woodstock's participation in the biofilter project and authorize the supervisor to sign the biofilter project Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The Hudson Valley Regional Council 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.

Building on California Quarry Rd - Laurie Kirby

It was reported that a large, obtrusive house is being built on the upper reaches of California Quarry Rd., in an area that blocks informal trails on Overlook. The house, on the side of Overlook, is now noticeable from the Thorn Preserve.

Public be Heard

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned promptly at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth S. Panza, Secretary pro tempore
Woodstock Environmental Commission

Attachments

Woodstock Environmental Commission letter to Woodstock Town Board advising there is an urgent need to mitigate the threat to the town's aquifer by removal of all offending material from 10 Church Road.

Next scheduled WEC Meeting,
Wednesday, November 19, 6:00 PM,
Comeau Great Room

Invited Speaker, November 19

Michael Veitch, Chair Woodstock Tree Committee

Invited Speakers, December 3

Weidemann and Kevin Smith on the Ashokan Rail Trail and Kingston's Linear Park
Howard Cohen on the Complete Streets project

TOWN OF WOODSTOCK, NEW YORK
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WOODSTOCK ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

November 6, 2025

To the Woodstock Town Board and Supervisor:

Based upon an abundance of evidence, including captioned photographs of multiple excavations after the invalidated *Plan E was executed, approximately 200 truckloads of contaminated construction debris remain at 10 Church Road in Shady as a known threat to the town's Public Water System if not already the source of PFOS contamination. The source of this toxic debris was established during the Town of Woodstock's prosecution of Karolys and Conigliaro by the sworn testimony of Francesca Conigliaro that the material originated from the shuttered Karolys yard in Saugerties, where the contaminated debris was shredded and screened to hide the true nature of the contaminants.

Given that dumping of any non-compostable waste violates Town law 192-4, as well as Town law 260-49 which prohibits private disposal areas, let alone when it contains contaminants identified by professionals who have advised will leach directly into our main supply aquifer and neighboring private wells, the Woodstock Environmental Commission hereby advises the Woodstock Town Board that on behalf of all Woodstock residents and visitors there is an urgent need for this threat to be mitigated by removal of all offending material from 10 Church Road to a secure landfill permitted to receive such material.

Review of the HydroQuest Report of October 14, 2023, addressed to the Woodstock Supervisor, makes clear that several qualified hydrologists and hydrogeologists are in complete agreement that the only acceptable remedy is complete removal of the offending material. Due to the lengthy delay in taking this action, it is highly probable that leaching into the undisturbed earth above the aquifer has already occurred. As the overburden is removed for disposal, further testing of the substrate must be performed under the direction of a qualified professional until no measurable quantity of toxic compounds remain.

It is therefore imperative that a qualified professional hydrologist, hydrogeologist, or

geologist be retained immediately to direct further mitigation and investigation efforts. The nature of this threat is urgent, since contaminants which are known to be present in the waste, have persisted in the Town Water Supply for the past three years.

The Woodstock Environmental Commission stands ready to assist the Town Board with any further information or assistance that may be needed.

Respectfully submitted,

WEC members Joe Otters, Arlene Weisman, Ken Panza, Evan Neumann, Stacy Andersen, Laurie Kirby, Susan Paynter

** Plan E was "invalidated and annulled" by the Ulster County Supreme Court.*