

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 September 3, 2025

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Vice-Chair Arlene Weissman called the September 3, 2025 meeting of the Woodstock Environment Commission to order at 6:00 PM.

WEC Members Present

Arlene Weissman, Vice-Chair	Term: expires 12/31/2025
Laurie Kirby	Term: expires 12/31/2025
Evan Neumann	Term: expires 12/31/2026
Joe Otters	Term: expires 12/31/2026
Kenneth Panza	Term: expires 12/31/2025

Guests Present

Laura Ricci, Woodstock Councilwoman
Marcel Nagele, Woodstockers United for Change
Vincent Mow, Woodstockers United for Change
Linda & Terry Lover
Sarah Yanosh

Approval of the Agenda

Erin Moran informed the WEC she won't be able to provide a Climate Smart update at tonight's meeting. Erin has been invited to present at the WEC's October 1 meeting.

Agenda, as modified, approved by unanimous consent.

Consideration of Minutes

Minutes for the WEC meeting of August 6, 2025, previously updated and distributed, were approved by unanimous consent.

Correspondence

Note from Michael Veitch, Chair, Woodstock Tree Committee, suggesting that the WEC engage the Bard Community Science Lab for testing at 10 Church Rd. The lab collects and analyzes water samples for sewage-indicating bacteria, turbidity, chlorophyll, a colored dissolved organic material, phycocyanin, and optical brighteners.

Request from Kate Hagerman of Catskill Mountainkeeper that WEC write a letter opposing the proposed, 250MW, lithium-ion battery storage facility at the site of the former Coleman High School in the Town of Ulster.

Arlene Weissman agreed to draft a letter for the commission's consideration.

Received a list of events from Woodstock Pollinator Pathway.

Received an Invitation to join the community brunch, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 6, at Bistro le Chat Barbu, 434 Main St., Rosendale to honor Manna Jo Greene, and her commitment to peace, justice, and the environment.

Old Business

Zena Development – Joe Otters & Ken Panza

Planning Board Sketch Plan Review #3, August 21, 2025

Discussion Among Consultants, Applicants and the Board

The Woodstock Planning Board held its third sketch plan review of the proposed extension and improvements to Eastwoods Drive. Zena Development is proposing up to 55 homes, two pickle ball courts, a tennis court, and a gym in the Town of Ulster. The plan requires extending and improving Eastwoods Drive, an existing private road in Woodstock, to the Town of Ulster town line, an estimated distance of 1,400 feet. The proposed 55-unit development does not include construction on the Woodstock parcels beyond road improvements. Eastwoods Drive and its proposed extension is within Woodstock's designated Zena Woods CEA.

The primary purpose of the third sketch plan review was to hear from the planning board's consultants.

Stephan Maffia, Planning Board's Traffic Consultant

Maffia explained that the proposed Zena Development residential units would not impose a traffic burden on local roads. One unresolved issue is the requirement of the New York State Fire Code for a second, alternative entrance to the housing units. Without an alternative road entrance, the housing units would be required to have costly sprinkler systems.

Alec Gladd, attorney for the applicants, suggested the planning board could consider waiving the requirements. Maffia pointed out that the alternative entrance requirement is part of the fire code, and beyond the authority of the planning board to waive. Gladd then suggested there were parts of the law that could be interpreted as authorizing waivers. John Lyons, Woodstock's Planning Board land use attorney, although familiar with the statute, was unaware of the suggested interpretation.

Peter Cross, Planning Board Chair, asked the town's land use attorney to sort through the issues and advise the board about its authority to consider waivers in these circumstances.

There was no reported progress on agreements with the Woodstock Fire Company to respond within the Town of Ulster. Apparently, it's the Ruby fire company that is responsible. The Town of Ulster conditionally approved the creation of a townwide ambulance district, which would seem resolve coverage by Woodstock ambulance.

Erik Kiviat, Hudsonia, Planning Board Environmental Consultant

Cofounder and executive director of Hudsonia Ltd. Research interests include ecology and conservation of reptiles and amphibians, including those in estuarine or urban environments; ecology of the nonnative plants purple loosestrife, Japanese knotweed, and common reed, and their management; energy from weeds; impacts on biodiversity from energy development and other land uses; wetland-human interactions; the Hudson River. Many publications on wetland ecology, conservation science and policy, rare species, invasive plants, Hudson Valley natural history, human ecology, and recycling.

Two environmental studies have been released: July 7, 2025 and July 23, 2025. Apparently, Kiviat has reviewed the July 7 study, but did not have a chance before the meeting to review the July 23 submission.

Kiviat identified two, high quality wetlands that would be affected by runoff and siltation. The environmental studies did not consider amphibian crossings on the Zena-Highwoods Road. Eastwood Drive is not the only road of concern.

The bald eagle that was nesting on Sawkill Road near the Kingston reservoir, has move to a better location within the Woodstock portion of the Zena Development's property.

Kiviat was asked to complete his environmental review for next planning board meeting on Zena Development's application.

Site Plan Wetland Maps

Labella Associates in its environmental review for the applicant, reported they only considered federal requirements. There's been no mention of the wetland buffer requirements imposed by Woodstock's Wetlands & Watercourse law nor was there any mention of the new DEC wetlands regulations. The site plan maps showing wetland buffers were date March 24, 2024. It's unclear if these maps show wetlands and buffers beyond federal requirements.

DEC Lead Agency Decision

The Ulster Planning Board determined that this project constitutes a Type 1 SEQR Action, and circulated a Notice of Intent to serve as Lead Agency on May 13, 2025. The Town of Woodstock objected to the Ulster Planning Board assuming SEQR Lead Agency on June 12, 2025, and has requested that Woodstock should be SEQR Lead Agency. The DEC can take up to 90 days to make the SEQR Lead Agency decision – no decision has been announced.

Scarecrow Festival, Saturday, Sept. 20 from 1-4 p.m.

Stacey Anderson and Arlene Weissman will be representing WEC at the Land Conservancy's Scarecrow Festival. There was a discussion about the require physical arrangements – some sort of awning or tent, table and chairs. There was also discussion about material and/or maps to display; possibilities include the NRI maps, the Zena Woods CEA map, and a map of the Wellhead

Protection District. There was discussion about polling visitors and asking about their environmental priorities for the town.

New Business

2025 Ulster County Watershed Roundtable

Monday, August 11, 2025, 1:30 – 4:30 PM

Arlene Weissman, Ken Panza & Evan Neumann

Each year, the Ulster County Department of the Environment sponsors a meeting where all the county's environmental and conservation commissions 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. Ulster County will be hiring a watershed manager to 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. The county's watershed manager will be responsible for working with these watershed groups also.

The purpose of the August Watershed Roundtable was to gather all the county's watershed groups to share their plans, status, needs, and emerging issues. The event was organized by the Ulster County Water Quality Coordinating Committee and the Hudson River Watershed Alliance.

Arlene Weissman submitted a list to the WEC of some comments made by the presenters. The list is included as an attachment to the minutes. Joe Otters was tasked by Arlene to extend and add to the list of "Ideas for Things to Work On."

Joe Otters' extended list of "Ideas for Things to Work On"

- Concerns for animal habitats and travel for aquatic organisms and others. Especially around streams, wetlands and vernal pools when constructing buildings and roads.
- Concern about road salts and spraying (DWSP2 is also concerned).
- Concern about future flooding (flood mitigation).
- Concern about Stream Fortification outside NYC Watershed (streamside restoration).
- Concern about wildfires (wildfire mitigation).
- Education - Invasive species. Ways to identify invasive plants, native plants that can outcompete invasives.
- Education - How to protect our drinking water. What products to avoid, what not to pour down the drain.
- Education - Lawn care that is environmentally friendly. Avoid chemicals, herbicides, pesticides, inorganic fertilizers. Don't mow in May (No Mow May). Don't rake your leaves.

NYSACC Membership and Conference, October 24-25

The New York State Association of Conservation Commissions (NYSACC) is an independent, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit education organization that provides leadership in the development of environmental programs for cities, towns, and villages. NYSACC was created by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in 1972 to coordinate local government-led conservation and environmental programs and to encourage municipal governments to establish Conservation Advisory Commissions (CACs) and Conservation Boards (CBs).

NYSACC's 2025 Conference on the Environment is set for October 24 – 25, 2025, and will be held at the Best Western Plus in Kingston NY. At this time, Arlene Weissman, Beth Reichheld, and Ken Panza plan on attending. An early agenda for the conference was provided to WEC members.

Information about the [NYSACC conference](#)

Consideration of a WEC budget for 2026

The WEC submitted a 2026 budget request for \$1,100 to cover educational events, supplies, dues, and publication expenses.

WEC Facebook Page

The WEC has obtained access and passwords for the WEC Facebook page. Evan Neumann agreed to administer the page.

Public be Heard

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned promptly at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth S. Panza, Secretary pro tempore
Woodstock Environmental Commission

**Next scheduled WEC Meeting,
Wednesday, September 17,
6:00 PM, Comeau Great Room**

Invited Guest Speaker

Marcel Nagele, Woodstockers United for Change
Shady Dump and Woodstock Water

Attachment

2025 Ulster County Watershed Roundtable, August 11, 2025
Arlene Weissman's notes

Christian Wilson – Deputy Director of U.C. Planning –

- Dept of Enviro. Would be the group to talk to for managing roads

Jake Wedemeyer – U.C. Water & Soil – Contact for multiple areas:

- Assisting with Water Quality Sampling
- Buckwheat outcompetes Mug wort and has pollinator benefits (get info)
- Farm Best Management Practices (BMT's)
- Cover Crop Program

Ideas to work on:

- Concerns for animal habitats and travel for aquatic organisms and others. Especially around streams, wetlands, and vernal pools when constructing buildings and roads.
- Concern about road salts and spraying (DWSP2 is also concerned)
- Concern about future flooding (flood Mitigation)
- Concern about Stream Fortification outside of NYC Watershed (streamside restoration)

Leslie Zucker – Ashokan Streams

- May be able to provide funding for the Willow stream restoration along 212.
- Building soils – with compost, wood chips, biochar, basalt rock dust, and compost tea applicat on new plantings. Learn more from her.
- They use aluminum screens instead plastic tree covers
- They make edible buffers on streams
- Told us to check out “My Coast” NY

Scott Chip – U.C. Dept Health

- Help with Septic out of watershed