

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 19, 2025

Call to Order

A quorum being present, WEC Chair Susan Paynter called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

WEC Members Present

Susan M. Paynter, Chair	Term: expires 12/31/2025
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

Michael Veitch, Chair, Woodstock Tree Committee	Laura Ricci, Councilwoman
Carol March, Woodstock Tree Committee	Laurie Osmond, Councilwoman Elect
Marcel Nagele, Woodstockers United for Change	Lizzie Vann, Bearsville Center
Vincent Mow, Woodstockers United for Change	Mike Onorato
	2 Others

Approval of the Agenda

Agenda, as modified, approved by unanimous consent.

Consideration of Minutes

Minutes for the WEC meeting of November 5, 2025, previously updated and distributed, were approved by unanimous consent.

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>

Correspondence

Received a letter from **Woodstock Land Conservancy** proposing a working relationship between the Conservancy's Focus on Water program and WEC's DWSP2. WEC is unable to discuss the DWSP2 report until it is released by DEC.

Announcements

Lead Agency: The DEC has designated the Town of Ulster Planning Board as the lead agency for the proposed Zena Homes development, settling a dispute with the Town of Woodstock. As lead agency, the Town of Ulster will be responsible for conducting the primary environmental review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). The DEC expects the Town of Ulster to actively include Woodstock and other involved agencies in the review process.

Air Quality Sensors: Andy Bicking, Director, Ulster County Department of the Environment, announced the 2026 Ulster County budget includes funding for local air quality sensors that will allow towns to participate in the Hudson Valley Community Air Network. In June of 2025, the Bard College Community Sciences Lab (CSL) launched the Hudson Valley Community Air Network (HVCAN), a regional, community-powered outdoor air monitoring project. This initiative brings together science, technology, and community partnerships to provide real-time, hyperlocal air quality data across the region.

Evan Neumann reported he is digitizing the volunteer interest sheet as a Google Form to be posted on the WEC Facebook page. All past replies to the volunteer interest sheet along with responses to the Google Form will be tracked in a spreadsheet to be shared with WEC.

The Secretary announced that commission members whose term expires at the end of 2025 and wish to be reappointed notify the town board of their intention. Generally, reappointments to standing committees are made during the town board's organizational meeting at the beginning of the new year.

Guests for December 3rd meeting will include representatives from WLC to talk about connectivity between the Ashokan Rail Trail and Kingston. Complete Streets Committee Co-Chairs Howard Cohen & Grace Murphy will discuss Complete Streets, the Route 212 Tinker Street Project, and connections between Bearsville, the Village Green, through West Hurley to the ART.

Invited Guest Speaker

Michael Veitch, Chair, Woodstock Tree Committee

Michael discussed three topics at tonight's meeting:

1. Creation and continued evolution of the tree committee,
2. The removal of over 200 trees to create a shared use bike trail to Bearsville, and
3. The danger of forest fires in Woodstock.

Formation of the Tree Committee

The tree committee was created by Town Board Resolution in 2014, and since then, Michael has been chair of the committee and will remain chair for the remainder of 2025 to focus on a multimillion-dollar state transportation project expected to impact the town's trees. Gay Leonhardt, a member of the committee, will transition into the chair role in 2026.

Woodstock has been recognized as a Tree City USA, indicating a commitment to effective urban forest management, based on its efforts to plant, care for, and protect public trees, along with celebrating Arbor Day. This New York State designation reflects the town's dedication to community forestry, with a specific Tree Board managing implementation plans and a commemorative tree program for donations.



A Bike Trail to Bearsville

New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) is planning a sidewalk and bridge replacement project to rebuild four bridges between the Woodstock Village Green and Bearsville as well as replace sidewalks and widen roads. The \$25 million project, as proposed, is expected to begin construction in early 2027. Mike explained the Complete Streets Committee has been lobbying the DOT to add a 17-foot wide corridor to the southside of Route 212 to accommodate a joint use, walking and biking trail from the hamlet to Bearsville.

According to the Tree Committee, this extension would require the removal of up to 220 trees along Route 212 between the hamlet and Bearsville. Also according to Mike, the Tree Committee has been excluded from any discussions, denied basic information about the proposal, and excluded from planning meetings. The Complete Streets Committee, in general, meets in private Zoom session disallowing public participation.

Mike asked the Environmental Commission to intervene with Complete Streets on behalf of the Tree Committee.

Forest Fires in the Catskills

Recent years forest fires highlight the increasing danger to Woodstock and the Catskills for forest fires. Any routine hike in the woods reveals huge amounts of dead and downed trees that would fuel a fire. Mike encourages the Tree Committee and Environmental Commission to add the danger from forest fire to their agendas.

Old Business

California Quarry Rd Construction: It was reported at WEC's November 5th meeting 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. Melissa Gray, Administrative Assistant, Woodstock Planning Board, confirmed the construction obtained all necessary permits and approvals.

DEC Grants 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.

Eligible projects in the following categories relating to aquatic and/or terrestrial invasive species: Spread prevention or boat decontamination; Rapid response and control; Research; and Habitat restoration and resiliency. After review, it was decided at this time that Woodstock lacks the conditions that would qualify for a grant.

Supervisor’s Response to WEC Recommendation: At its November 5th meeting, WEC adopted a resolution advising 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. The Supervisor responded to this advisory during an interview with [The Overlook, published November 14, 2025.](#)

Biofilter Grant and MOU: The Hudson Valley Regional Council (HVRC) secured a grant to mitigate methane emissions at Mid-Hudson landfills by installing biofilters at 14 closed landfills in the region. The Woodstock landfill is a candidate site. The Town Board, at its November 5th meeting, tabled consideration of the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) regarding the installation of biofilters at the Woodstock landfill.

New Business

Arlene Wiessman, Vice-Chair, distributed information packets of Woodstock zoning laws and associated maps for the commissioners reference.

Public be Heard

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned promptly at 7:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth S. Panza, Secretary pro tempore
Woodstock Environmental Commission

Next scheduled WEC Meeting,
Wednesday, December 3, 6:00 PM,
Comeau Great Room

Invited Speakers for December 3

Tim Weidemann and Kevin Smith, Woodstock Land Conservancy, on the Ashokan Rail Trail and Kingston’s Linear Park.

Howard Cohen and Grace Murphy on the Complete Streets project.