

# 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 October 15, 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

Caroline Ritchey  
Transition Woodstock, Repair Cafe  
Kirk Ritchey  
Transition Woodstock  
Marcel Nagele,  
Woodstockers United for Change  
Vincent Mow,  
Woodstockers United for Change

Alan Weber,  
Woodstockers United for Change  
Laura Ricci, Councilwoman  
Julia Blelock, DWSP2 Working Group  
Matthew Eshed  
Western Colorado University  
Masters of Environmental Management

## Approval of the Agenda

Agenda, as modified, approved by unanimous consent.

## Consideration of Minutes

Minutes for the WEC meeting of September 17, 2025, previously updated and distributed, were approved by unanimous consent.

Minutes for the WEC meeting of October 8, 2025, previously distributed, were approved by unanimous consent.

## Correspondence

**Report of Large Goldfish** – Received email from **Bill Peters** sighting “a large goldfish in the Millstream [sic] from the overpass between Ohayo Mtn. Road and The Woodstock Inn.” The report is probably referring to the Sawkill Creek at the intersection of Millstream Rd. and Tannery Brook Rd.

Laurie Kirby verified that all varieties of goldfish and koi are New York State Regulated Invasive Species, and advised the correspondent to report sightings to <https://www.nyimainvasives.org/report-an-invasive>



**Landfill Biofilters Project MOU** – Received a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the Hudson Valley Regional Council to proceed with the Woodstock Landfill Biofilter Project.

## Announcements

**Andy Bicking, Director, Ulster County Department of the Environment**, announced that a watershed coordinator has been hired and will begin on November 24. The coordinator will manage the county’s participation in the Lower Esopus, Rondout, and Wallkill watershed management projects. These management plans were discussed during the August 11 Watershed Roundtable.

**The Energy, Environment & Sustainability (EES) Committee** of the Ulster County Legislature postponed consideration of resolutions to ban large scale battery storage (BESS) from Ulster County. Instead of a countywide ban, a resolution will be considered at the next EES meeting recommending individual municipalities consider temporary moratoriums that would allow through consideration of battery storage.

The Town of Ulster Town Board declared the lithium-ion battery plant a could have adverse impacts on the environment, thus allowing for a full SEQR environmental review.

**Fire Prevention Week** is highlighting the dangers of lithium-ion batteries. This year’s theme: "Charge into Fire Safety; Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home." Smartphones, power tools, lawn equipment, tablets, and headphones, contain lithium-ion batteries. These batteries typically are safe, although they pose a fire hazard if damaged or misused.

**Don’t Trash Lithium-Ion Batteries.** Rechargeable lithium-ion batteries are increasingly being found in trash, leading to a rise in fires at waste handling sites. Don’t put Lithium-ion batteries in the recycling bin or in the regular trash. Instead, get rid of them at a battery recycling site.

## Invited Guest Speakers

### Kirk Ritchey and Caroline Ritchey of Transition Woodstock

#### Transition Town Movement

The Transition Town Movement is comprised of grassroots initiatives that seek to build community resilience in response to such challenges as resource depletion, climate change, and economic instability. Woodstock is part of a locally focused, world-wide movement that is currently active in over two thousand different places on this planet.

Woodstock NY Transition (WNYT) aims to network, collaborate, and learn from existing organizations, neighbors, families, and friends. If we collectively plan and act early enough, we can create an ecologically sustainable way of living that is significantly more connected and fulfilling than the one we find ourselves in today.

Seven Woodstock residents attended a two-day Training for Transition workshop in the Hudson Valley in 2011, and then launched the Woodstock Transition Initiating Group that held public awareness meetings discussing topics like water, food, sustainability, winterization, waste management, tool exchanges, permaculture, seed swapping. Woodstock Transition held their “Great Unleashing” in September of 2012 and became the 115th official Transition Town in the US, approximately fifty people signed up to join working groups.

#### Working with WEC

Since its founding, Woodstock Transition has worked with the Environmental Commission and Woodstock on joint projects and has participated in commission sponsored events. Joint projects include

**10% Challenge** – NYSERDA sponsored program, in partnership with RUPCO, to improve the energy efficiency of residential housing. Woodstock sponsored several events at local firehouses to inform residents of availability of support to audit and insulate their homes.

**Solarize Campaign** – NYSERDA sponsored campaign, in joint effort with Catskill Mountainkeeper and Sustainable Hudson, to promote rooftop solar energy. The Solarize kick-off event, with over 100 participants, was held in the Woodstock Town Hall.

**Project Drawdown** is an independent, internationally trusted organization driving meaningful climate action by connecting people to science-based climate solutions and strategies. Woodstock Transition introduced Project Drawdown to Woodstock with a series of meetings and film events, and Project Drawdown concepts were incorporated into Woodstock’s Climate Smart application.

**Earth Day** – Woodstock Transition has been part of many of Woodstock’s sponsored Earth Day events.

**Community Heat Pump Project** – The Town of Woodstock and Woodstock Transition partnered with CHA Consulting Inc. for a \$100,000, NYSERDA, Category A, Community Heat Pump Pilot Program grant. Community Heat Pump System (also called District-Style Heat Pump System) is a system serving a cluster of buildings, such as Woodstock’s commercial hamlet, where heat pumps in two or more buildings are joined in a network of connector pipes and share common heat sources.

**Repair Café** – The repair cafe is a Woodstock Transition led event where volunteers help people fix broken household items for free, promoting sustainability and waste reduction. Visitors bring broken objects and volunteer "fixers" work with them to make the repair themselves. The goal is to keep items out of landfills, save money, and build community by sharing valuable repair knowledge.



November 1, 2025  
Repair Café Announcement

The Repair Café is sponsored by the Environmental Commission at the Woodstock Community Center four times a year. Between 75 and 100 people bring items for repair, and about 20 volunteers help with the repairs. It's common in Ulster County for environmental commissions and conservation advisory commissions to sponsor Repair Cafés as community events.

Woodstock Transition working groups, not necessarily related to the Environmental Commission: The **Film & Discussion Series**, in cooperation with the Woodstock Jewish Center and Woodstock Land Conservancy; the **Garden Share** working group; and Woodstock's **Pollinator Pathway**.

It should also be noted that Kirk Ritchey was chair of Woodstock's Comprehensive Planning Committee in 2017 and 2018. The Comprehensive Plan was adopted in November, 2018.

### Resolution to Renew Support of Repair Café

The Repair Café is an Environmental Commission sponsored event held at the Woodstock Community Center. The Environmental Commission needs to renew this support and authorization, by resolution, for the year 2026.

#### Repair Café Schedule for 2026

**Saturday, February 7, 2026**, Woodstock Community Center, 10 am to 2 pm

**Saturday, May 2, 2026**, Woodstock Community Center, 10 am to 2 pm

**Saturday, August 1, 2026**, Woodstock Community Center, 10 am to 2 pm

**Saturday, November 7, 2026**, Woodstock Community Center, 10 am to 2 pm

### Old Business

#### Big Deep, Little Deep

The Chair reported meeting with **Dave Holden**, Woodstock trail guide, to discuss "The Green Necklace," a comprehensive recreation plan for Woodstock.

The Chair reported meeting with **Muriel Stallworth**, owner of a property adjacent to Big Deep, about a proposed stewardship program for Big Deep.

The proposed letter of recommendations for big & little deep was postponed for further consideration.

**Shady Dump/10 Church Road Resolution**

Laurie Kirby read a proposed letter addressed to the Town Board recommending reserving part of the town’s budget surplus in anticipation of remediation of the Shady Dump/10 Church Road site.

**Resolution:** Authorize the Chair to forwarded the proposed letter to the Town Board. Introduced by Laurie Kirby, seconded by Arlene Weissman.

	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 will forward the approved letter to the town board for its consideration.

**Comeau Pollinator Garden**

Joe Otters updated the commission on the proposed pollinator garden, located in an area topped with low quality topsoil, just outside the newly renovated town offices. The proposed garden will be approximately 50 by 100 feet. A detailed plan prepared by Cindy Muro, a horticulturist with the Pollinator Pathway, has been submitted to the Town Board for its approval.

The town board’s decision is contingent on approvals from the Tree Committee and WEC. WEC has already approved. The town board also needs to approve an estimated expense of \$1,175. The schedule for installing the pollinator garden is dependent on town board’s approval, the weather, and the growing season.

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

**Stacey Anderson & Arlene Weissman**

WEC hosted a table at the Woodstock Land Conservancy’s Scarecrow Festival with two objectives: 1) to understand community environmental priorities, and 2) to recruit volunteers. It was reported that fewer Woodstock residents attended the festival than out-of-town visitors and tourists. Although they were unable to get a sense of community environmental priorities, they did identify about ten individuals that expressed interest in getting involved with environmental activities.

NYSAAC Conference, October 24-25

CERM Conference, October 22-23

Several WEC members have enrolled in the CERM Conference, but considering the close proximity and possible overlap, decided not to attend the NYSACC conference.

DWSP2 Working Group Report

Arlene Weissman, member of the DWSP2 working group, reported that the state is reviewing the final report. The working group expects an answer/approval by year end.

## New Business

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs), Ken Panza

Briefly discussed a HAB monitoring program for Woodstock. The area of the Hudson River around Kingston has been significantly impacted by a large and extensive harmful algae bloom (HAB). This bloom, identified as the cyanobacteria *Microcystis*, is the largest recorded in nearly 40 years and has been centered near Kingston, stretching from the Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge south. The bloom poses health risks to people, pets, and wildlife, and authorities have advised avoiding contact with affected water and reporting sightings.

With HABs confirmed in the Hudson River, it might be useful to establish a monitoring program for Woodstock's water bodies. Begin by identifying water bodies susceptible to HABs from the NRI documentation and maps, and then conduct an initial survey to determine if HABs are present. There are many types of green algae, but not all are harmful. If algae are detected, then correct identification is important.

At the minimum, assuming no HABs are initially found, a program that monitors Woodstock's water bodies would collect useful information for environmental planning and provide an early warning system for HAB detection.

Local Flood Analysis Grant (LFA), Arlene Weissman

Ashokan Watershed Flood Hazard Mitigation Working Group invited Woodstock to apply for Local Flood Analysis grant to study the Beaver Kill in Willow, an area within the Ashokan watershed.

Following Tropical Storms Irene and Lee in 2011, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and West of Hudson watershed stakeholders developed a framework for funding a Flood Hazard Mitigation Program in the NYC West of Hudson watershed.

Under this initiative, DEP funds local Stream Management Program partners and the Catskill Watershed Corporation to support the analysis of flood conditions, the identification of hazard mitigation projects, and the implementation of community-scale projects that reduce flood hazards and impacts, protect water quality and public safety, and promote community resiliency.<sup>1</sup>

The deadline for application is October 27, and Arlene will attempt to file an application.

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<sup>1</sup> "Local Flood Analysis," Catskill Streams, Available at <https://catskillstreams.org/lfa/>

### WEC's November 5 Meeting

The Town Board will be holding a budget hearing on November 5, beginning at 7:00 pm in the Comeau Great Room. To avoid potential conflict, WEC has changed its starting time to 5:30 pm, with the intention of ending by 6:30 pm, a half hour before the town's budget hearing begins.

### Public be Heard

### Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned promptly at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth S. Panza, Secretary pro tempore  
Woodstock Environmental Commission

### Attachments

Letter from the Woodstock Environmental Commission to the Town Board concerning the budget surplus and the 10 Church Road dump.

Next scheduled WEC Meeting,  
Wednesday, November 5, 5:30 PM,  
Comeau Great Room

Erin Moran will update the commission about the Climate Smart Program.



WOODSTOCK ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

To: Supervisor and Members of the Town Board  
From: Woodstock Environmental Commission  
Date: October 16, 2025

Re: Town budget surplus and 10 Church Road remediation

The WEC wishes to raise an important issue concerning the managing of the Town's current budget surplus. Some have proposed that, rather than a tax cut, it would be prudent to hold onto the surplus for a "rainy day" fund. We insist that the "rainy day" is here today, in the form of the environmental emergency posed by the illegal toxic waste dump at 10 Church Road.

As you know, six environmental professionals have inspected the site, resulting in the following information. The dump, which has now been there for more than 5 years, contains a variety of highly toxic substances including PFOS and heavy metals. It threatens to pollute – perhaps already has polluted – the town aquifer and the wells of neighboring residents, as well as the Sawkill Creek. The remediation efforts so far ("Plan E") failed to address the fundamental issue: the only way to remediate is to remove the toxic fill. In fact, Plan E now has placed a berm of that debris close to the border of the property, where it sits above the Sawkill. For the sake of all our residents, for future generations, and the environment, it is imperative that the Town of Woodstock enforces its laws and acts quickly to remediate.

Such remediation will be costly – perhaps of the order of a million dollars. While it is likely that some of this money can be recovered by the legal process, that may take years, and every delay will increase the probability and extent of the harm.

Much of the material in the dump is unrecognizable. Should asbestos be found in it, which is common in illegal construction debris of this kind, the legal pressures on the Town for immediate remediation will be even sharper. The Town must act expeditiously or face an environmental catastrophe.

We urge the Town Board to hold this surplus to cover this necessary expenditure in the short term, with a view to recovering the expenses in due course. A short-term tax cut is poor recompense

for the likely sicknesses, the costs of installing private treatment plants, and endless litigation that will follow from further inaction.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan Paynter, Chair  
Arlene Weissman, Vice-chair  
Ken Panza, Secretary  
Joe Otters, member  
Evan Neumann, member  
Stacey Anderson, member  
Laurie Kirby, member