

TOWN OF WOODSTOCK, NEW YORK

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**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

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Colony of the Arts**WOODSTOCK ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION****The WEC's 2023 Yearend Report**

The summary below details the WEC's key 2023 activities.

WEC members during the first half of 2023: Alex Bolotow (Chair from 1/1/23 to early April), Arlene Weissman (Vice Chair), Bob Wolff (Secretary), Chris Compton (Chair from April on), Julia Blelock, and Susan Paynter (joined in April).

WEC members from August to December 2023: Erin Moran (Vice Chair and Acting Chair), Julia Blelock (Secretary), Susan Paynter, Michael Kolber, and Raye Langford. Cory Smith served from August until November 6. Michael Kolber took over as Secretary on November 15. Very sadly, Chris Compton, appointed Chair in April, passed away on October 7.

Initiative	Timeframe	Details
Adoption Registration, and Interpretation of the Zena Woods Critical Environmental Area (CEA)	January 2021 to December 2023	<p>At the behest of the Woodstock Planning Board, the WEC began looking into CEAs in 2021 as a tool to protect the environment and foster responsible development. (In 1993, the Town of Woodstock adopted and registered as its first CEA "All State Designated Freshwater Wetlands.") The WEC worked on this in 2021 and 2022. The July 5, 2023, issue of the DEC's Environmental Notice Bulletin reported a "Designation of Critical Environmental Area" in the Town of Woodstock, Ulster County. Here's a link to the notice:</p> <p>https://www.dec.ny.gov/enb/20230705_not3.html</p> <p>and here's a link to the list of Critical Environmental Areas in Ulster County, which includes the Zena Woods CEA:</p> <p>https://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6184.html</p> <p>On August 30, the Planning Board sent a letter to the WEC requesting a review of the CEA and recommendations about interpreting it when considering development within the newly appointed area. Erin arranged for a presentation from Gretchen Stevens and Amanda Bevans of Hudsonia to the WEC on November 1. Cory wrote up and circulated a list of questions in advance of the meeting to steer the conversation productively. From that presentation and discussion, the WEC</p>

		developed a set of recommendations, written up by Raye, for submission to the PB by Erin.
Review of the proposed FAM Acres LLC (renamed Live Edge Woodstock) subdivision	January through December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WEC emailed the Planning Board comments in advance of the PB's 1/5/23 meeting. The WEC continued to closely follow this development through December.
Scenic Overlay	January	The WEC submitted a formal letter to the Planning Board with feedback on the Scenic Overlay regulations, including proposed changes to the current code.
Proposed Terramor Glamping Project	January to February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WEC studied the proposed development (located in Saugerties but bordering Woodstock) and determined that it could be extremely detrimental to sensitive wetlands and habitats present on Woodstock land immediately adjacent to this 77+-acre project. Members of the WEC spoke at meetings and in the press to try to defeat this project. On January 30 Alex Bolotow sent a letter on behalf of the WEC to the Woodstock Town Board, strongly opposing the proposed Terramor project. In February the WEC was extremely gratified to receive word that the Terramor developers had withdrawn their plan.
Composting	January through December	<p>A key initiative recommended in Woodstock's 2018 Comprehensive Plan was town-wide composting. To address this, the WEC undertook the following during 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In early January, Chris acquired a web domain, "Woodstock NY Composting," and created a draft webpage. On 1/12 Alex passed along the disappointing news that the WEC and Town of Woodstock had not been awarded the Ecological Restoration Grant for a composting initiative requested from Partners for Climate Action Hudson Valley (PCAHV) in its September 2022 submission. During the summer Supervisor Bill McKenna announced that the Town of Woodstock had set aside \$20,000 as a capital expenditure to be used for a town-wide composting program. At its 9/6 meeting the WEC made plans to submit a grant application to the DEC for "Municipal Food Scraps Recycling Initiatives – 2021," even though the deadline had just been changed from 5/3/24 to 10/4/23. Raye Lankford agreed to take the lead on this, with technical assistance from Julia. Despite the tight deadline and numerous difficulties, Raye (drawing in part upon Alex's earlier submission) wrote the application, and she and Julia successfully submitted it via the Grants Gateway on 10/2,

		<p>two days before the deadline. The amount requested was \$78,891 for a two-year composting program to be launched on 1/1/24. The 25% match required by the DEC can be met with the TOW's \$20K commitment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julia followed up several times with the DEC in November, trying to get a timeframe for their decision. During that time, the application status on the Grants Gateway was, as it had been since October 2, "assignment of reviewers." • On November 16 heard that the DEC was "sorting out how much funding remains in the program," and that we're on the "wait list of applicants." We were to expect an update soon.
10 Church Road: toxic landfill remediation	January through December	<p>The WEC continued to try to help the Eighmey family and other neighbors impacted by the toxic landfill dumping that took place at 10 Church Road in 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erin remained, as she had been since 2020, very active on this. • Alex, Arlene, and Bob—until their resignation at the end of June—were also extremely active. • Chris, Bill McKenna, and Laura Ricci met at 10 Church Road in July. • Erin, Julia, Raye and Cory met at 10 Church Road with the owner (Vince Conigliaro) and Supervisor McKenna on 9/8. • Erin wrote up a site visit summary. She made sure this topic was on the agenda at almost every WEC meeting, from January through December, leading the group in attempts to get the illegal C&D fill removed. • Susan, Michael and Cory attended neighborhood meetings and kept the WEC current on developments. • In early November, Julia filled out an online application for free training from the NYS DOH/DEC, under the aegis of the Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2). The Town initially decided not to pursue this and then reversed itself; we were able to get the DOH/DEC to consider us for the program. • In November and December Erin and Bob Wolff, with input from WEC members, began drafting a resolution for consideration by the Town Board. But since there is now a lawsuit against the Town, the WEC is holding off on the resolution.
Pollinator Pathway	January through December	<p>The WEC continued to work with partners such as the Woodstock Land Conservancy, on pollinator initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In early January the WEC reviewed a draft Pollinator Pathway resolution and presentation for the January 10 Town Board meeting.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next the WEC requested a new date for the TB presentation, since it was dropped from the TB's 1/10 agenda. • Various Woodstock groups came forward with requests for changes to the resolution. • At the WEC's 10/4 meeting Erin announced that she was working with Georgia Asher, Ellie Reese, and Kathy Longyear, to try to finalize the resolution. When finalized and passed, a follow-up policy would need to be written.
Zoning Codes	January through December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WEC kept abreast of proposed updates from the Housing Oversight Task Force, assessing them for their environmental impact. • The WEC sent a letter with comments on May 7 to the HOTF. • The WEC studied the third version of the HOTF's draft when it became available in October. Most members attended the public hearing on October 17, either in person or via Zoom, and several spoke (including Susan and Michael). • Susan spoke on behalf of the WEC at a November public hearing, requesting 80 to 85% open space in R8 and CEA zones. • Susan worked with Laura Ricci on tightening up vague language in the wetlands and watercourse zoning law.
Geothermal Heating	January through December	<p>Background: in 2022 Arlene joined a working group to complete an application for a grant to undertake a feasibility study assessing geothermal for the town center. The application was successfully completed by the 8/16/22 deadline, and in December the WEC received unofficial news that the grant was approved.</p> <p>The working group continued to meet in 2023. When Arlene resigned from the WEC in June, Erin temporarily became the WEC's representative. This changed in early October, when Erin announced that going forward, the working group will meet on the last Monday or every month, from 10:00 AM. Raye offered to become the new representative, and thereafter kept the WEC updated.</p>
Proposed Motel on Calamar Lane	January through December	<p>The WEC kept abreast of this proposed project via various materials, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter that Calamar Lane resident Stephanie Kaplan wrote to the Planning Board in January • A January 20 letter from Supervisor Bill McKenna to the PB, expressing his concerns about the proposed development • A report that Nan Stolzenburg (of Community Planning and Environmental Associates) sent to the PB in early March • October to December e-mail between Stephanie Kaplan and WEC member

		Michael Kolber: Stephanie stated her concerns about construction along a water source, pesticides that would be used, and other environmental issues. Michael explained that the developers have not submitted an updated site plan to the Planning Board. After the site plan is submitted, the WEC can offer an opinion. Stephanie was told about the process.
Earth Day 2023	Saturday, April 22, 2023, 10 to 2	Erin again chaired this very successful event, which the WEC celebrated at the Mescal Hornbeck Community Center. Presenters/partners/activities included the following: Ravensbeard Wildlife Rehabilitation Center; Office of Senator Michelle Hinchey; Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger; Tim Koch of the Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program; Woodstock Land Conservancy; Woodstock Pollinator Pathway; Woodstock Farm Festival; Onteora Central School 6 th graders discussing plastics; a WEC presentation about its efforts past, present, and future; story hour with Natalie from the Woodstock Library; eco arts and crafts for kids; a special appearance by Mother Earth, a raffle basket of eco-goodies and gift certificates; and more!
Proposed Woodstock National LLC Development	July through December	Susan took the lead on this, working with the Woodstock Land Conservancy. She, Cory, and Michael were very active, working on educational presentations, a website, and other outreach. In December Susan informed the WEC that Woodstock National LLC has closed on the 625-acre property, which includes part of the Zena Woods CEA.
Woodstock Bear Task Force Initiative	September through December	Anula Courtis, Melanie Marino, and Rachel Jackson attended the WEC's 9/6 meeting and presented this initiative. The WEC promised to discuss it at their 10/4 meeting and vote to issue a letter of support. On 10/4 the WEC voted unanimously to send the letter. Julia sent a letter on behalf of the WEC on November 1.
NYSERDA's Community Campaigns	September and October	Julia attended a Zoom call on 9/27 hosted by the Hudson Valley Regional Council—presenting the NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities program to sign up local residents to acquire solar arrays, clean heating/colling, and EVs. Grant money is available to Woodstock, depending on its success. Due to many competing commitments, the WEC temporarily tabled this, for reconsideration in 2024.
Woodstock Land Conservancy Fund Raiser: The second annual Scarecrow Festival	October 14; postponed until October 21, then canceled due to rain	The WEC prepared to host a table at the event, helping young children to make seed bombs with topsoil and seeds. Raye took the lead on this. The WEC also prepared to hand out BearWise materials to the kids.

