**TOWN OF YORKTOWN CONSERVATION BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**October 21, 2020**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Board Members Present**: Co-Chair Phyllis Bock, Co-chair Diane Dreier, Peter Alduino, Robert Waterhouse, Patrick François

 Kim Hughes - Secretary

**Board Members Absent:** Justin Pruyne, Walt Plankl

**Guests:** Ralph Mastromonaco PE, Joe Riina PE, Mel Samaroo, Mike Conway, Alex Cochran, Dan Ciarcia PE

Phyllis Bock called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The meeting took place via Zoom Conference Call.

Approval of Minutes of Prior Meeting: Done

Communications Received: None

Chair Persons Report: None

Reports from Other Committees: None

**New Business:**

* **Hansmann Subdivision:**

The Conservation Board reviewed the site plans for Hansmann Subdivision with PE Ralph Mastromonaco and will not make any comments or recommendations until a site visit is completed.

* **Williams Contracting: 1338 Jacob Road**

The Conservation Board reviewed the site plans for **Williams Contracting: 1538 Jacob Road** with Joe Riina, PE of Site Design Consultants and has the following comments and/or recommendations:

The Board is in favor of the donation to the Tree Fund as a form of mitigation. The Board is in favor of this project moving forward.

**Old Business:**

* **Hilltop Hanover:**

The Conservation Board has reviewed the site plans for 1220 White Horse Lane with PE Joe Riina of Site Designs and has the following comments and/or recommendations: The Conservation Board was pleased to see the house moved further away from the conservation land, however that move created a steep slope from the back of the house towards the conservation land. The slope is proposed to have erosion control blankets and planted with lawn. Best practices for this steep slope are to install erosion control blankets but lawn will be difficult to maintain on the steep slope. The Board recommends this slope be heavily planted with native shrubs to prevent erosion and reduce maintenance.

* **Yorktown Energy Storage:**

The Conservation Board has reviewed the site plans for Yorktown Energy Storage with Mel Samaroo and Mike Conway from Borrego Solar and have the following comments and/or recommendations: A site visit conducted with the Planning Board on October 17, revealed a mostly paved area used for parking of utility company vehicles and dumpsters filled with construction debris. The area is bounded by Rt. 6 to the south, with a watercourse between Rt. 6 and the paved area. To the north is the main stream that feeds into Lake Osceola. Leading from the proposed site for the battery storage units down to Lake Osceola is a unpaved roadway that ends near the stream. Debris fills the watercourse between Rt. 6 and the site. Trees in this corridor are covered with invasive vines. The applicant is leasing a portion of this area to site the battery storage units. The entire site requires attention to remediate adverse impacts to the watercourses surrounding the site that currently exist. To improve the situation, the watercourse should be cleared of debris and invasive vines removed. There are no measures in place to prevent pollutants from the utility trucks and other vehicles from entering the stream and wetlands. The applicant is proposing to add trees to the berm between Rt. 6 and the watercourse to block the view of the site from Rt. 6. Although this provides a visual barrier, it does not mitigate for incursion into the wetland buffer. The applicant should clean up the watercourse. The applicant should add a native shrub buffer to block access to the dirt roadway that leads down to the lake, and along the north edge of the site between the stream and the area to be developed. The details of the conservation easement noted on the plan should be identified.

* **650 Pinesbridge Road:**

The Conservation Board reviewed the site plans for 650 Pinesbridge Road Subdivision with PE Dan Ciarcia and PE Alex Cochran and have the following comments and/or recommendations: The plans show large quantity of trees to be removed. The number of removals will require a tree permit and restitution/mitigation of adding trees on the site or contribution to the tree fund. Board recommends meeting with the Tree Committee for advice on restitution/mitigation for the trees to be removed. Board requests a stormwater management prevention plan for review to further evaluate the effect on the environment.

* **Hemlock Hills:**

The Conservation Board has reviewed the site plans for Hemlock Hills Solar Farm with Paul Morini and walked the site at 500 Croton Avenue and has the following comments and/or recommendations:

The siting of this application for a solar array at Hemlock Hills Farm is in keeping with the Conservation Board’s advice to place solar farms on already disturbed sites that do not require large scale tree removal. However, the proposed solar farm is almost entirely within a wetland buffer, proscribed by an adjacent stream, and two small ponds. Mitigation for incursion into the buffer has not been addressed.

The proximity of the Rows 19 and 18 to the existing stream at the southern edge of the installation should be reviewed. The portions of the array within the 100’ buffer should be reduced to protect the stream.

The “dry ditch” between the two arrays serves as an overflow from the upper pond to a wetland area to the east. How will construction impact this area? What protection will be put in place to handle stormwater that flows into the wetland during and post construction?

Hemlock Hills Farm is currently working with the Watershed Agricultural Council to improve the stream mentioned above. What impacts will construction of the solar farm have on the stream? The applicant should show plans that detail how the stream will be protected during construction.

In many solar installations pollinator friendly native plants have been incorporated to provide habitat for bees and other pollinators. New York is one of 6 states adopting pollinator-friendly solar to encourage local and migratory pollinator health. Planting pollinator-friendly vegetation in solar farms provides multiple ecological and economic benefits to stakeholders. Using native plants as ground cover can help recharge groundwater, reduce erosion, and improve soil carbon sequestration

<https://www.eesi.org/articles/view/pollinator-friendly-solar-installations-benefit-wildlife-farmers-climate>.

Plans for stormwater management should be detailed for further evaluation of the project.

Meeting Ended 9:45 PM with a motion from Phyllis Bock and second from Diana Drier