

Minutes to the Village of Ardsley Climate Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting, 02/02/2023, 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Attendees: Trustee Liaison Asha Bencosme, Savannah Donahue (CAC), Trustee Steve Edelstein, Eda Kapsis (CAC & Facilitator), Lorraine Kuhn (CAC and Village Stormwater Coordinator), Dave Lew (CAC Chair), Anthony Puliafico (CAC), Carol Sommerfield (CAC Steering Committee, Pollinator Pathway Chair & minutes)

1. Outcome of NYSERTA Audit of Village Hall and Current Actions Including Application of Related CEC/CSC Grants Received To Date.

Asha shared the CEC point/grant summary. Ardsley has earned \$20K in grant money to date and achieved 3,300 points.

The NYSERTA audit of Village Hall has completed and the most impact will be achieved by replacing lighting fixtures with LED bulbs. This will cost ~\$12K and there will be \$8K remaining for other energy saving/emission reducing actions.

Asha is working with the Village to identify other grants we can pursue as a Bronze certified community. The Bronze status makes us eligible for many grant opportunities. We need to identify opportunities that align with Ardsley's needs and strategy. A grant writing resource would be very helpful to reap the benefits of the money that is available.

The Bronze certification is valid for 5 years. Recertifying at Bronze will be a challenge as we need to take new actions, and many of them are more capital intensive than the ones taken for the 2022 certification. The Village needs to start looking at a strategy for recertification in year 3 to prepare for the new certification period.

2. Pollinator Pathway Update

Rewilding Webinars

The topic of reducing the lawn and planting native plants has generated much interest. We had 80 people registered for the February webinar.

Mayors' Monarch Pledge Update

Ardsley is one of a few municipalities in North America that earned the Leadership Circle Award in 2022 for the NWF Mayors' Monarch Pledge. Mayor Nancy Kaboolian signed the Mayors' Monarch Pledge on April 11,

2022 and committed to take 14 actions in 2022 to support the survival of the endangered monarch butterfly and other threatened pollinators. All 14 were completed and on December 13 we received word that Ardsley earned the Leadership Circle award. Ardsley is now part of an expanding North American network of municipalities working to create habitat in public parks, public landscaping, vacant lots, roadsides, medians, green roofs, backyard gardens and open spaces throughout the entire community.

Ardsley has reenrolled in the program for 2023 and committed to 14 actions to support and protect Monarch Butterflies.

Library Programs

We continue our strong partnership with Marianne Ripin of the Ardsley Public Library. The December *From Seed to Plant* education program was a big success. We are planning another joint program in March as part of the Spring Gardening Festival.

Upcoming Programs

As part of our 2022/2023 to raise awareness about pesticide, herbicide and fungicide use in the landscape we are sponsoring a webinar in February featuring Paul Tukey, a national expert on organic lawn care. We also continue to provide non-pesticide solutions, raise awareness, and have a call for individual action in the monthly newsletter.

We are partnering with the Saw Mill Coalition on a vine cutting along the South County Trailway on March 4 (snow date is March 5).

On March 12 we are partnering with the Ardsley Garden Club and the Ardsley Public Library to produce the first Spring Gardening Festival at the Ardsley Community Center. There will be formal workshops, panel discussions, plant pre-orders, kid activities, and plant/garden consults.

For Earth Month (April – May), the Ardsley Pollinator Pathway will be focusing on invasive plant awareness and education. Invasive plants are a leading cause of habitat loss and reduced biodiversity. Another focus during Earth Month will be to increase the number of properties on the Ardsley Pollinator Pathway. Finally, an application for a grant to fund the expansion of the AFV and Hart's Brook Park pollinator gardens is underway. We will receive word by February 14. If we are awarded the grant we will be expanding the gardens during April and May, which may also be part of Earth Month activities.

Additional Earth Month events were highlighted. Steve Edelstein mentioned

that there will also be a planting at Pascone Park and Lorraine Kuhn reported that we will have another Trees for Tribes event to plant redbuds at Silliman Park.

Actions:

- Send upcoming pollinator pathway events to Savannah so she can communicate the opportunities with the Ardsley High School students. **Carol**
- Let Savannah know about the Earth Month campaign to add more yards to the pollinator pathway. It is possible that some families are already adhering to the practices that would make them pollinator pathway yards. **Carol**
- EPA WaterSense Partner reporting will be due at the end of February. Reporting will be no issue. Between Lorraine's excellent stormwater work and the pollinator pathway focus on native plants, creating good soil, planting trees, and promoting green infrastructure we will have much to report. **Carol**

3. Spring Ardsley CAN Activities and Possible Collaboration with AHS ETF

Meeting with AHS ETF students

Eda Kapsis, Tony Puliafico, and Carol Sommerfield met with the AHS ETF on Monday, January 23. Tony facilitated a discussion with the students about the environmental issues that are of concern and what actions they would want to see in the community. Asha Bencosme will present the [students' feedback](#) to the Ardsley Board of Trustees on February 6.

Dave provided a link to BOCES educational programs that may be of interest to the High School students. The information can be [accessed here](#).

Asha has reached out to [Bash the Trash](#). These programs are targeted at families and are a fun way to get the recycling/reuse/reduce message to others. There could be a role for ETF to create an educational program after the event to help people understand how to reduce waste.

Actions:

- Send upcoming Ardsley CAN events/activities to Savannah so she

can rally student volunteers and the ETF can support the efforts.
Eda

4. Status of GridRewards for the Village

Ardsley is now participating in the municipal [GridRewards](#) program. If Ardsley can reduce electricity use during 'peaker' events there is the potential to save ~\$6K-\$7K annually. However, a balance must be struck during these periods between reducing energy usage and providing essential and needed services to the Village.

5. Update on NYU Capstone Study of Municipal Vehicles

The previous greenhouse gas emissions study (GHG) concluded that the major emissions area for the Village is in the area of transportation. This then became a place to focus on solutions for reduction.

The NYU graduate students are working hard to analyze the data, research solutions, and balance the needs of the Village against moving to new, lower emission technology. They are doing a very thorough and thoughtful job. The students will present their findings and recommendations to the Village Board at the end of March.

6. FYI 23/24 Budget

A budget meeting for the CAC is in the process of being scheduled for mid-February.

Action:

- Provide a blank CAC budget template for the group to enter their budget needs. **Eda**

8. Discussion and Closing

Ardsley is now a Tree City USA. For greater impact it would be wise to review the current tree ordinance, which is decades old and more lax than other town ordinances. Research into other municipality tree ordinances would be helpful to guide a more effective ordinance to save trees within Ardsley.

Additional idea for impact in the Village were discussed including:

- Food scrap curbside pick-up. It is probably best for the Village to explore what will be needed in the future as this will become a reality.

- Consider an Earth Day garbage pickup – see if there could be a partnership with Ardsley Cares
- Can we partner with the Greenburgh Nature Center to distribute compost bins and hold an educational event on composting?
- Changing to garbage pick up one day a week. Do we really need two days of garbage pickup? If people compost and reduce their waste the feasibility of moving to one garbage pickup a week is high.
- Outreach to the business community about sustainable landscaping practices. Perhaps Planting Westchester could assist here.
- Planting Westchester may also be a resource for the Planning Board.

The next CAC meeting will be Thursday, April 6, 2023, 7-8 pm via Zoom.

At the April meeting, we'll be joined by Millie Magraw, Program Coordinator (Water Quality & Planning) Westchester County Dept. of Planning. Millie led the remarkable 2022 project work.

Phase I of Planting Westchester has been completed. The initiative encourages and empowers Westchester residents, municipalities, schools and businesses and other organizations to help promote Climate Solutions, Restoration of Natural Systems and Local Food Security through growing and maintaining healthy trees and/or other plants. Underlying the project are core principals of inclusive, socially-equitable decision making, community participation, communication, and relationship-building, and the value of healthy natural systems including biodiversity not only environmental and climate resilience but also to human health and well-being.

Phase II is beginning and the team will reach out to a few key municipal environmental groups to help develop a baseline of needs across the County by discussing ways in which the County can support CACs (or similar types of groups) and the municipalities in which they are located. Specifically, is there an interest in the County offering guidance (educational materials; model ordinances; training and educational workshops for residents, businesses, municipal DPWs local elected officials, etc.)?

Here are four areas for discussion:

1. Community Gardens
2. Green Infrastructure
3. Invasive Species Management
4. Trees