

Town of Knox  
Conservation Advisory Council  
Meeting Date: February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Present: Nathan Giordano  
Dee Woessner  
Pat Irwin  
Tony Forti  
Travis O'Donnell  
Laure-Jeanne Davignon  
Peter Shunney

Also: Dan Driscoll, Planning Board  
Eric Kuck, Town Board

MINUTES

Minutes from January 2016 Meeting were approved.

Pat reported that Thom Engle of the NE Cave Conservancy was interested in presenting to the CAC at our March 2016 meeting. Pat will confirm with him.

Dee reported on her progress compiling the various studies that we have on underground water systems.

Dee reported on the Berne Conservation Board meeting that she attended. A rep from the Audubon Society was there talking about municipal certification. Discussion of the pipeline expansion came up at their meeting, their CB members had discovered work was already being done unbeknownst to the town or the landowner, and found that some of the pipeline route passes through DEC wetlands in Knox which houses a Great Blue Heron rookery.

On that topic, Eric reviewed his presentation to the Town Board on the Kinder-Morgan Pipeline expansion, and announced that there will be a public forum held at the Knox Town Hall 3/12/16. It was discussed that the CAC could ask the TB to request the state perform an environmental impact study on the project.

Motion – TO, 2<sup>nd</sup> DW, approved unanimously: The CAC recommends the Town of Knox request to the state that an Environmental Impact Study be performed for the Kinder-Morgan Pipeline expansion, in light of changes to the environment, as well as technology, manufacturing, and usage since the original pipeline was installed.

The CAC discussed the option of the Town requesting Intervener Status in regards to the KM pipeline expansion project, which would assure timely updates and communication with KM as well as the opportunity to attend related events and forums.

Motion – PI, 2<sup>nd</sup> TO, approved unanimously: The CAC recommends the Town of Knox request Intervener Status in regards to the Kinder-Morgan Pipeline expansion.

Motion – TO, 2<sup>nd</sup> DW, approved unanimously: The CAC supports a Town Resolution of Opposition to Kinder Morgan’s NED Gas Pipeline for the following reasons; There is not adequate data to assure safety during installation, operation and maintenance, and because of the Council’s opposition to the process of “hydro-fracking” due to the negative environmental impact it causes.

The CAC discussed the status of the Planning Board’s proposed amendments to the town zoning ordinance regarding artificial lighting and noise regulation. The final draft of the prepared statement was reviewed and discussed.

Motion – approved unanimously: The CAC supports the following statement regarding proposed amendments to the town zoning ordinance:

Town of Knox Conservation Advisory Council  
Statement on the amendment of the town Zoning Ordinance in relation to  
Noise Regulation and Artificial Lighting Standards  
February 2016

The mission of the Conservation Advisory Council of the Town of Knox is to provide information, expertise, advisement and guidance to the Town of Knox Board on matters pertaining to the protection, conservation, preservation, restoration and enhancement of natural and cultural resources within the Town.

The Conservation Advisory Council would like to underscore the importance of the goals listed in the Town’s Comprehensive Plan, Section 5.2. The goals listed here include the protection of the Town’s natural resources, the preservation of the Town’s rural character, the encouragement of the continued existence of open and agricultural lands and agriculture, the protection of the aesthetic, cultural and historic character of the Town, and the encouragement of economic vitality consistent with the Town’s rural character. Finally, and most relevant in this instance, is the goal listed in section 5.2.6, to “Maintain a continuing planning process to ensure that the goals herein are implemented through appropriate revisions to the zoning ordinance...”

After much thought and discussion the Conservation Advisory Council would like to offer its full support for amending the town Zoning Ordinance to specifically address the areas of Noise Regulation and Artificial Lighting Standards. To reach this conclusion the Conservation Advisory Council considered the following points:

- i. The proposed amendments will serve to protect two of the Town’s unique natural resources, specifically dark skies and a quiet natural environment.
- ii. The protection of these natural resources will in turn help maintain quality of life for town residents and help protect the value of their homes and properties.
- iii. The proposed amendments will allow the growth of business in a way that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, offering them clear and concise guidelines for development.
- iv. Many surrounding communities use similar zoning regulations to ensure smart growth and maintain quality of life for their residents.

In conclusion, the Conservation Advisory Council supports the amendment of the Zoning Ordinance to include Noise Regulation and Artificial Lighting Standards, and requests that the members of the Knox Town Board consider enacting such amendments without delay.

Dan presented regarding work the Planning Board is undertaking to address commercial solar installations in town. There are several companies exploring the possibility and there is currently no language permitting it in the current zoning ordinance.

The CAC discussed an email request from the supervisor regarding dead and dying trees in the town park.

Motion – NG, 2<sup>nd</sup> PI, approved unanimously: The CAC offers the following response regarding the supervisor’s request for input on dead and dying trees in the town park:

1. Remove the dead Poplar trees that separate the little league dugout and the hill leading to the playground area. Many of them are dead or dying and last year we had an issue where one of them fell on top of the little league dug out and the adjacent fence. Fortunately there were no children playing ball that day. There is one specifically that is leaning severely but I told him to go ahead and cut that one down now before someone gets hurt. *CAC Response: If the Poplar trees need to be removed for public safety the CAC recommends replacing them with a line of trees placed similarly to the line of Oak trees on the other side of the walking path. The CAC recommends replacing with either Oak or Basswood, both of which are native to our area.*
2. Remove approx. two dozen Ash trees in the wet lands that have been destroyed by the Emerald Ash Borer. A handful have already fallen and the intent is to remove the dead ones to avoid them falling over and hurting someone. He’s also under the impression that this could potentially stop the spread of the insect? *CAC Response: If the Ash trees are in imminent danger of falling on a designated walkway they should be dealt with, all others should not be removed since they are part of the habitat whether living or dead, and their removal would not impede the spread of the EAB. (note: after the meeting NG consulted with Gary Kleppel, as was suggested, and he agreed with the CAC determination.)*
3. Remove one or two of the dead Norway Maples that are located Immediately next to the concession stand in the park. *CAC Response: If the Norway Maple trees are determined to be dead they should be removed and replaced with Sugar Maple or Basswood trees, both of which are native to our area.*

Dan offered to forward information to the CAC regarding the Knox Woodland Trail.

Motion to adjourn at 10:08PM – NG, 2<sup>nd</sup> PI, approved unanimously.

The next CAC meeting will be March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016.