



Kingston Conservation Advisory Council
www.kingston-ny.gov.KingstonCAC

2017 Annual Report

General Background

This volunteer board is an advisory body that works to ensure the conservation of Kingston's natural resources and the enhancement and protection of its environment while fostering unified action on environmental matters. The City of Kingston is one of 16 other Ulster County Conservation Councils. The Kingston CAC was created under Resolution 180 of 2008, in November, 2008.

This advisory board, consisting of Kingston residents, advises the Planning Board, Common Council, and Mayor on matters pertaining to the natural environment of the city; conducts public programs to inform the public of local and regional environmental issues; and coordinates with local groups which have an impact on the local environment.

The Kingston Conservation Advisory Council meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm in Kingston City Hall Conference Room 1. The meetings are open to the general public. Since its inception, the CAC has held 102 general council meetings and 13 special meetings, in addition to sub-committee meetings. All meeting minutes and agendas are posted and archived on the Kingston CAC webpage of the City of Kingston website.

2017 Council Members (two year terms):

Julie Noble, Chair	1/2/2009-12/31/18	5 th term
Elizabeth (Betta) Broad	12/11/14-12/31/19	2 nd term
Lorraine Farina	1/1/16-12/31/19	2 nd term
Emilie Hauser	1/1/13-12/31/18	3 rd term
Lynn Johnson	2/6/14-12/31/19	3 rd term
Kevin McEvoy	8/21/13-12/31/18	3 rd term
Casey Schwarz	1/2/11-12/31/18	4 th term

2017 Highlights

Natural Resources Inventory

With an ultimate goal of creating an Open Space Plan for Kingston, the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) process continued in 2017. A large amount of time and work was dedicated to the NRI process in 2017. The most significant was that CAC members worked directly with the Natural Resources Inventory consultant, John Mickelson, who worked jointly with the Kingston Parks and Recreation Department under the Supervision of Julie Noble. The focus of the work in 2017 was to complete the mapping needed for the Natural Resources Inventory and to develop data layers to create an Open Space Index. Data was finalized and also converted into KMZ data, which is utilized with Google Earth.

Additionally, in 2017, the CAC worked with the Parks and Recreation Department to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire an Open Space Plan Consultant to execute the work of the City's Hudson River Estuary Program grant, under their Grants for Local Stewardship Planning Round 18. CAC members were involved in the drafting and review of the proposed RFP, in consultant evaluation and selection. At the close of 2017, the contract between the City and the Consultant: Behan Planning and Design, was being executed. The Kingston CAC has been closely involved and will continue to closely be involved in this Open Space Planning process.

Wood Burning/Air Quality Sub-Committee

In 2016, the Kingston CAC began a focused look into air quality concerns, particularly with a focus on localized residential wood burning in Kingston. This initiative advanced through 2017. A subcommittee of the CAC met several times with City staff from the Kingston Fire Department, Building Safety, City Corporation Counsel's Office and Economic Development Office to fully understand the scope of the issue as well as Kingston's existing legislation, enforcement and education on the issue. The sub-committee also did extensive research on how other municipalities nationwide address the issue, consulting with experts in the field. A webpage on the CAC website was developed to communicate about the dangers of wood smoke as well as vehicle idling. At the close of 2017, further educational messages were being developed and grant funding was being sought to pay for monitoring equipment.

Climate Adaptive Design Studio (CAD)

CAD is a studio research effort using design to inspire climate adaptation, in partnership with Cornell University Landscape Architecture, Cornell Water Resources Institute, and the NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program. The Climate-Adaptive Design (CAD) Studio links Cornell Landscape Architecture students with Hudson Riverfront communities, like Kingston, faced with flooding and sea-level rise to explore design alternatives for more climate resilient, beautiful and connected waterfront areas. Students work with community stakeholders, non-profit partners, and technical experts in an interdisciplinary process of waterfront design. The project culminates with an open house to share student ideas with the community. CAD designs show the community options for development and revitalization that also deal with expected sea-level rise and flooding.

Kingston CAC members participated in a full semester of CAD as Kingston was the focus of the CAD Studio for the spring of 2017. With a focus on Kingston Point Beach and Park, CAC members served as a resource, for insight, input and expertise in waterfront, environmental, historical, economic and social issues in Kingston.

Tidal Waterfront Flooding Task Force

The Kingston Waterfront Flooding Task Force was appointed by Mayor Shayne Gallo in the fall of 2012, and was charged with evaluating the present and future vulnerability to flooding, storm surge and sea-level rise along the Rondout-Hudson waterfront. This group was asked to recommend strategies for a resilient waterfront and convened from December 2012 through August 2013. The group produced a final report [Planning for Rising Waters: Final Report of the City of Kingston Tidal Waterfront Flooding Taskforce](#) but the Task Force culminated with the production of the report. The Kingston CAC has continued to play a role in continuing the efforts of this Task Force. In 2017, CAC members participated in the following professional development opportunities pertaining to the waterfront:

- a) Sea Level Rise Implementation Learning Group (Kingston, Piermont, Catskill, Stony Point) meetings on March 7, June 19, and August 29, 2017.

Planning Board and Department Review

Kingston CAC members regularly attend the Kingston Planning Board monthly meetings to stay abreast of local proposals and items of interest in Kingston. Additionally, beginning in the fall of 2012, the Kingston CAC began the informal process of general reviews of proposed developments that came before the Kingston Planning Board. This process includes a general review of each new proposal or action that comes before the Planning Board, for environmental impact. The scope of review has included concerns such as storm water runoff, habitat conservation, open space preservation, walkability and bikeability, and in-fill development. Concerns and recommendations are submitted to the Planning Department, for review by the Planning Board, in advance of the Planning Board meeting and a CAC member attends each Planning Board meeting to be available for further comments or questions.

In 2017, several site proposals were reviewed by the CAC including:

- a) Alms House/Landmark Place (#300 Flatbush Avenue)
- b) 65-85 East Strand Proposal Review

Letters of Support for Municipal Initiatives

The Kingston CAC values the work of the municipal staff in regards to relevant environmental issues and often provides letters of support to municipal applications for funding directed toward environmental initiatives. There were no formal letters of support submitted by the Kingston CAC in 2017.

Environmental Reviews

Frequently, the Kingston CAC will receive formal requests from either a community member, city staff, the legislative body or the executive body to review, research or weigh in on local environmental issues. The CAC then independently decides what action to take on each proposal. In 2017, the Kingston CAC participated in the following reviews:

- a) Hudson River Barge Anchorage Proposal Review
- b) Zoning Code Update Review
- c) Pilgrim Pipeline Natural Resources Impact Review
- d) City of Kingston Sidewalk Code Review, Task Force Participation, Ongoing input
- e) NYSDEC SEQRA Update Review
- f) EPA Hudson River 5 Year Superfund Review
- g) NYC Filtration Avoidance Determination Review
- h) Proposed change to Code Chapter 336: Sanitation and Weeds
- i) Proposed Clean Energy and Paris Agreement Resolution
- j) Central Hudson Gas Regulator, 245 Washington Avenue, Review
- k) Lincoln Park Grid Support Center Review

Outreach/Engagement

It is very important to the Kingston CAC to maintain a transparent and open relationship with the citizens of Kingston regarding environmental happenings in Kingston. All meeting minutes and agendas are posted in a timely manner on the City of Kingston website's CAC page, as are pertinent documents that the CAC has adopted, resource links and tools used for projects and initiatives.

Additionally, a member of the Kingston CAC attends each Public Safety/General Government/Auditing Committee meeting of the Common Council in order to keep the city government abreast of Kingston CAC initiatives as well as to maintain an open line of communication with decision makers. Further, all CAC communications are shared with the Common Council CAC Liaison, which, in 2017 was Reynolds Scott-Childress. Rennie attended several monthly meetings thus maintaining the line of communication to the Common Council.

Special Guests/Presentations

The Kingston CAC often hosts organizations or individuals to monthly meetings for relevant topic based presentations. These may either be pertinent to ongoing CAC initiatives or are strictly informational. In 2017, the Kingston CAC hosted the following special presentations or guests:

- a) John Mickelson, NRI Consultant, NRI project
- b) Barbara Stemke, Declaring Kingston a Certified City
- c) Dennis Larios, Engineer 65-85 East Strand Proposal

Professional Development

Kingston CAC members regularly attend meetings, workshops and conferences to further their professional development and to keep up to date on currently, relevant environmental issues regionally and locally. In 2017, CAC council members participated in:

- a) Communicating about Climate Change Webinar
- b) Brownfield Redevelopment and Community Revitalization Summit
- c) 2017 Conference on the Environment
- d) Panel on Climate Change
- e) Google Earth Training
- f) Time and Resource Management: How to Effectively Manage Multiple Responsibilities and Prioritize Tasks- Training
- g) Leadership and Collaboration: How to Manage Partners and Work Toward Common Goals- Training
- h) Hudson River on the Rise: Waterfront Planning for Communities and Nature
- i) Planning Effective Projects Workshop

Organizational Liaisons/Appointees

Kingston CAC council members hold positions on local environmentally related boards, and regularly acted as liaisons to:

- a) Ulster County Environmental Management Council
- b) Kingston Land Trust Rail Trail Committee and Land Use Committee
- c) Climate Smart Kingston Commission
- d) Friends of Forsyth Nature Center
- e) NYS Association of Conservation Commissions
- f) American Solar Energy Society
- g) Public Safety/General Government/Auditing Committee liaison
- h) Kingston Planning Board liaison
- i) Heritage Area Commission
- j) Friends of Historic Kingston
- k) Hudson River Environmental Society
- l) Ulster County Human Rights Commission
- m) Kingston's Sidewalk Task Force
- n) Mid-Hudson Regional Sustainability Coalition
- o) Kingston Preservation, Inc.
- p) Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission