



CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

May 6, 2026
6:30 In Person
Lansing Town Hall

MINUTES

1. Call Meeting to Order

Present: Ed Dubovi, Robyn Bailey, Travis Kitch, Aziza Benson, John Hatfield, Brian Boerman, Kristin Maushart, Emily Phillips, John Fleming

Non-CAC attendees: Christine Montague, Town Board; Ruth Groff, Town Supervisor; Ashleigh Seyfried, Southern Tier 8 Regional Board

A quorum of the CAC members was present

2. BioBlitz Planning and Community Outreach for the Lansing Center Trail “meadow”

The committee discussed organizing a 24-hour BioBlitz event intended to support the Town of Lansing’s eligibility for future climate-related grant opportunities while also promoting public environmental education and community engagement. This event would also support the efforts of the Friends of the Lansing Center Trail in developing a maintenance plan for “meadow” encompassed by the trail. August 8th was discussed as the preferred event date based on ecological timing, including bat activity and bird migration patterns, as well as the availability of participating professionals and researchers. The event is expected to involve professionals conducting wildlife and species surveys throughout the 24-hour period, alongside potential public educational walks and demonstrations.

The group also discussed the need for public outreach and publicity materials, including a flyer to promote the event and recruit volunteers and attendees. Consideration was given to managing attendance and learning from prior BioBlitz events hosted by other organizations.

The committee also discussed the importance of developing a Safety Plan for the event and consulting organizations such as PRI or others with prior BioBlitz experience to gather lessons learned, logistical recommendations, and operational best practices.

BioBlitz Action Items:

- Contact PRI and Cayuga Nature Center to confirm professional participation and finalize August 8th date.
- Draft and circulate a preliminary event flyer for group review.
- Follow up contact with Cornell and additional wildlife specialists regarding participation.
- Coordinate restroom access and logistical support for the 24-hour event.
- Develop a Safety Plan for the BioBlitz.
- Consult experienced organizations regarding lessons learned and best practices from prior BioBlitz events.
- Determine which experts will lead public educational walks.

3. Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Progress

Ashley Seyfried from the Southern Tier 8 Regional Board (Town of Lansing coordinator for the Climate Smart Communities program) reviewed ongoing work associated with the Town's Climate Smart Communities certification efforts and discussed progression to Bronze status in the CSC program. Ashley was able to identify app 150 pts toward the 120 needed for Bronze level certification. However, a key piece of data that may still be needed is submission of a spreadsheet related to a "Evaluate Policies for Climate Resilience" task and the use of the Climate Smart Resiliency Plenary Tool to conduct a baseline inventory of existing community policies, plans, and mitigation measures. The discussion emphasized that the process should be viewed as an inventory and assessment exercise rather than a pass or fail evaluation. The intent is to identify strengths, weaknesses, and planning gaps that may support future recommendations and grant opportunities.

CSC Action Items:

- Complete the resiliency inventory Excel sheet which will be done with the assistance of the Planning Dept. Information to be sent to Ashley by May 15th.
- Finalize yes/no policy evaluations.
- A narrative report based on the spreadsheet will be done by Ashley.
- Identify planning gaps and future grant opportunities.
- Ashley will submit the Town of Lansing package by May 22nd for consideration of certification in 2026.

4. Landfill Monitoring and Environmental Liability

The committee discussed concerns regarding the status, maintenance, and long-term oversight of approximately five or six landfill sites located within the Town of Lansing. Discussion focused on long term environmental monitoring responsibilities, potential groundwater and waterway contamination risks, and liability concerns should landfill operators become insolvent or bankrupt in the future. Questions were raised regarding capped landfill areas, fly ash piles, long-term monitoring requirements, and what happens once standard monitoring periods expire. The group emphasized the importance of educating the public using factual information and improving community understanding of landfill caps, monitoring pipes, and environmental oversight procedures. The discussion also touched on the importance of long-term planning and reassessing environmental conditions over future 30-year intervals.

Landfill and Environmental Action Items:

- Contact New York State environmental agencies regarding the status of Lansing area landfills.
- Develop a factual public education summary regarding landfill monitoring systems.
- Reassess long term landfill safety and environmental risks in future planning discussions.

5. Stream Bank Restoration and Natural Resource Protection

Discussion focused on the benefits of vegetation, root systems, and tree planting for stream bank stabilization and erosion control along Salmon Creek. The group discussed opportunities to work with Soil and Water Conservation District staff on future planting and restoration projects once water levels recede later in the summer. Jon Negley indicated that the District was awarded an engineering planning grant on Salmon Creek from DEC. This engineering plan is essential for future state grant applications dealing with erosion along Salmon Creek.

Concerns were also raised regarding stream bank conditions near Highland and the gun club area,

including permit-related issues and long-term erosion management.

6. Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

The committee discussed the long-term sustainability of electric vehicle charging infrastructure within the community. This issue was brought to the CAC by a Town Board member with a request to seek information on future funding. Questions were raised regarding payment structures, ongoing maintenance responsibilities, and responsibility for upkeep at locations such as the marina. Some questioned whether the Town residents support the cost of providing EV charging stations and perhaps an information session would provide some insight into that question.

7. Environmental Management Council (EMC) Update

The group received an update regarding the Environmental Management Council, which has now been reorganized into legislative, outreach, and executive committees. The EMC continues maintaining the Unique Natural Areas Database while monitoring state environmental legislation and broader environmental initiatives.

An invitation was forwarded to all CAC members to attend the EMC public meeting at the Tompkins County Library on the 14th of May from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM.

8. Open Meetings Law

While the Town of Lansing CAC simply functions as an advisory group for the Town Board, a decision was made at the state level that CACs should operate under the Open Meetings Law. To clarify the requirements of this law, a request is being made to the Town Board to provide some training as to the specifics of this law.