

# TOWN OF CANANDAIGUA

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION BOARD 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

December 6, 2018

**Purpose:** Town Code (Chapter 18-6) and New York State General Municipal Law (GMU Article 12F Section 239-X Paragraph 1 Subparagraph f) both require that the Environmental Conservation Board (ECB) submit to the Town Board a year end annual report on the work and activities of the ECB. The State law additionally requires that the Town Board forward a copy of the annual report to the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation.

**Open Space Preservation:** Applications for the NYS Department of Ag and Markets Farmland Protection Implementation Grant (PDR) program was submitted in the spring of 2018. We are awaiting a reply to our submissions. Out of the eleven(11) applications rated, three(3) were submitted to Ag & Markets; one(1) by the Finger Lakes Land Trust and two(2) by the Town. If granted, 701 acres of additional farmland will be protected.

The Town has undertaken a review of the feasibility of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program in our Town. The Citizens Implementation Committee, on which two(2) members of the ECB serve, has prepared an analysis for the Town Board of its applicability to the need of and the potential for land conservation. This program is now under review by all the Boards.

The newly adopted Open Space, Conservation and Scenic View Master Plan has a unique feature that will provide assistance in rating PDR and TDR applications and other actions in the future. A rating system for all open space parcels of one acre or more in the Town was developed using natural features as categories for the rating. This is specifically useful for the ECB as we participate in future ratings for farmland and open space protection and as we review referrals from the PRC and others.

**Open Space Index:** The ECB is charged with maintaining an up to date inventory and map of lands of conservation interest in the Town. Three members of the ECB and others joined a committee to update the Open Space, Conservation and Scenic Views Master Plan, a goal identified in the Town's Comprehensive Plan, during 2018. A consultant was hired to manage this process. During 2017-2018 a process was initiated to develop a comprehensive analysis of lands of environmental importance in the Town; to hold public meetings and conduct a survey of Town residents to inform the Master Plan process; to prepare an implementation plan to protect resources considered not sufficiently protected as a result of the committee's findings; and to develop a ranking template for all properties, among others. A completed plan was offered to the Town Board in the summer of 2018 and adopted after public review. The resulting Implementation Strategies and Actions of the Master Plan is now the driving force of public education and outreach for the ECB. We have formulated a 2019 Projects Plan which includes public programming for a number of the Actions indicated in the Implementation Strategies. We look forward to providing our residents with awareness of the value of our natural resources and need for public conservation of them.

**Natural Resource Protection Referrals:** And as last year, in 2018 dozens of site plan applications for development in locations of potential environmental significance were referred to the ECB for review. The ECB provided comments to the Planning and Zoning Boards and others in mitigating potential negative impacts. With the development of an ECB Advisory Report format we are now able to complete a thorough review of a site plan application and other referrals against a comprehensive checklist of all Town policies regarding natural resource protection. This checklist documents the natural resource affected by development and the corresponding Town policy that relates to the resource. This uniform approach to our reviews provides valuable information to referring boards and the public.

**Natural Resources Inventory:** The Natural Resource Inventory was adopted by the Town in 2011. This Inventory has now been scheduled for an update in 2019. The Town's Budget has provided for line item funding to hire a consultant for this update. The ECB is eager to become involved in this process in the coming year.

**Public Education and Outreach:** The ECB continues its mandate in public education to inform our residents of natural resource protection issues. The Board continues to provide articles to the Town's monthly newsletter with topical/seasonal environmental content. We also provide content on the Town's listserv, Facebook, and our own Board page on the Town website.

We continued our Aquatic Invasive Species Workshop at Onanda Park this year. We partnered with Canandaigua Lake Watershed Assoc., Canandaigua Lake Watershed Council, OCSWCD, and FLCC to provide content and outreach. Of particular interest this year was a discussion on the occurrence of algal blooms endangering water quality and recreation of Canandaigua Lake.

As the result of a Local Solid Waste Management Plan adopted by the County to counter the closing of its landfill by 2028, the Town of Canandaigua entered into a contract with Ontario County to provide public education and outreach for Waste Diversion initiatives to our residents. At the Open House of the Town's new Highway Facility, the ECB exhibited a comprehensive display of educational materials and Giveaway initiatives to encourage participation in our new Food Recycling program and to further awareness of plastic Recycling information. We spent many months developing the educational materials and planning for the Giveaway Programs for home composting and transfer station food collection.

**ECB Involvement:** ECB members continue to serve on other committees in the Town to ensure that the intent of the many resource protection policies in the Town will be represented. ECB members have committed to serving the Town on: the Citizens Implementation Committee (CIC), the Open Space Master Plan Committee, the Planning Review Committee (PRC), the Town Board's Environmental Committee, the Ontario County, County Road 16 Planning Study Steering Committee, and the Local History Team. Our members share their experience and information with each other at every meeting. This exchange enables the ECB to be aware of critical issues that may have environmental consequences.

**The ECB offered a recommendation** to the Town Board during the Budget review process. Our recommendation: if an unexpended funds balance occurred during the 2018 budget year, that \$150,000 be transferred to the Open Space Capital Reserve Fund. The Town Board approved by resolution.

**Proposed ECB Projects for 2019:** The following projects and others are being considered by the ECB and will be submitted to the Town Board for their approval in January 2019.

Public Education and Outreach opportunities for: Bird Habitat at Miller Park, Forum on the Benefit of Trees with the OCSWCD, and Conservation Easement Education Seminar with the Finger Lakes Land Trust.

Monthly newsletter articles on topics, such as; Hydrologic Value of Trees, Habitat information, and topics from the Open Space Master Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Marthaller, Chairperson  
Environmental Conservation Board

