

Role of CAC's in local government:

A persuasive voice for protecting the local environment.

Efforts are undoubtedly inspired by personal responses to Nature and the beauty of living in a place like Amenia, but CAC's are most successful when they present positions based on the facts: science and research. By providing reliable well-considered information the CAC may develop credibility.

Elements of success for a CAC:

- Hard Work and Organization-attend planning, zoning and legislative meetings, often selecting a liaison may be helpful. Attending the meetings is helpful in understanding the role and function of these different boards and meeting the people involved.
- Common Sense and Diplomacy-be an advocate, not an obstructionist. Although you may feel strongly, personally even, about an issue it is critical to the CAC's credibility to be professional.
- Education/Information/Communication-Learn about the environmental issues facing your town and share the information.

Develop a cooperative relationship with local boards (zoning and planning) and the local government. Look for ways to work cooperatively. CAC's can assist planning and zoning boards to see the long term picture on growth and its impact on natural resources.

Working Relationships:

- Planning Boards and Zoning Boards

CAC's can assist planning boards in developing their master plan by providing natural resource information and identifying Critical Environmental Areas (CEA's)

CAC's may assist zoning boards through review of existing codes and variances, sharing information on how zoning may impact resources.

Conservation Tools that may assist CAC's

- Natural Resource Inventory
- Open Space Inventory

The EMC can assist you in pursuing these should you become interested in doing one of these. Other partner organizations may also help.

Partners for help

If you don't have a background in science or are unfamiliar to things like planning, development or environmental review, there are partners and opportunities to help you learn.

DEC, EMC, Dept. of Planning, DC Planning Federation and other CAC's (*see directory*). All can help your CAC with strategies and approaches and to assemble information to provide sound, balanced presentations on environmental issues.

Personal contacts available through all, EMC has library, DEC has a great Website, the Planning Federation holds workshops in the spring and fall

Possible Activities for CAC's:

- *SEQR(explain) and Environmental Review*-there are resources through Dept. of Planning, DCEMC, and the Department of Environmental Conservation to help you understand the process and better understand the role you can play
- *Special Projects*-these are many and varied from assisting w/open space issues (conservation easements) to recycling or a service project such as a board walk around an environmentally sensitive area.
- *Education/Interpretation*-these may include field trips, tours, workshops, guides to natural areas (ex. Pawling Significant Natural Areas piece, Hand-outs and publications for new home owners to help them appreciate the natural beauty of the area.)

Look for opportunities to help the community appreciate natural resources.

CAC: a great opportunity to learn more about your environment and participate in efforts to secure and protect it. When surveyed, many people list the environment as a top priority, but few volunteer to do anything about it. You've taken the first step towards protecting and improving a beautiful place.