



“Our town would benefit from having a CAC. How do we do it?”

A CAC can be created through one of three ways: by resolution pursuant to Section 239-x of General Municipal Law, by ordinance, or by local law. Ask your Town Attorney for assistance.

Section 10 of Municipal Home Rule Law specifically authorizes the adoption of local laws for the protection and enhancement of the physical and visual environment. A Model Local Law to establish a Conservation Advisory Council, with information on how to modify it for your town, is posted on the Columbia Land Conservancy (CLC) website at clctrust.org/model-local-law

The most important aspect of a CAC is its membership. CACs are most successful when they represent a broad range of viewpoints and backgrounds, are non-partisan and able to work cooperatively with all town agencies, and when they are passionate about what they can do for their community.

The Westchester County Environmental Management Council has produced an excellent guidance document on CACs. View it at clctrust.org/CAC-guide.

clctrust.org/cac

Columbia Land Conservancy's Conservation Advisory Council website has additional information on Conservation Advisory Councils and what they can do for your community, including a model local law, links to local town CAC websites, and additional resources.

Columbia County Conservation Advisory Council Roundtable

The Roundtable is an informal forum where CACs and other interested residents come together to discuss topics of mutual interest and to learn about recent and upcoming activities. Check clctrust.org/cac for the date, time, and location of the next Roundtable.

CAC Partners

CLC is pleased to join our partners to support efforts by Columbia County towns and their residents to protect and improve our environment and natural resources

Columbia County Environmental Management Council
NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program
Hudsonia Ltd.
Hudson River Valley Greenway



The Columbia Land Conservancy works with the community to conserve the farmland, forests, wildlife habitat, and rural character of Columbia County, strengthening connections between people and the land. If your town board would like to learn more about Conservation Advisory Councils, we can arrange for a presentation at a town meeting. Contact Ellen Jouret-Epstein, Columbia Land Conservancy's Community Projects Manager, at 518.392.5252, ext. 208 or ellen@clctrust.org.

www.clctrust.org

IF YOU COULD GIVE YOUR COMMUNITY

- ✓ **CLEAN GROUNDWATER**
- ✓ **HEALTHY FORESTS**
- ✓ **ABUNDANT WILDLIFE**
- ✓ **SCENIC VIEWS**
- ✓ **SENSIBLE GROWTH**
- ✓ **INFORMED DECISION-MAKING**

WOULDN'T YOU?

A Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) can help your town achieve these goals and more



Lorraine Strohmer, Copake

WHAT IS A CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL?

A Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) is an advisory body that can advise town agencies on the development, management, and protection of natural resources.

HOW IS IT CREATED?

A CAC can be formed and appointed by a Town Board under the statutory authority of Section 239-x of Article 12-F of the NYS General Municipal Law.

WHO ARE ITS MEMBERS?

A CAC is composed of 3-9 town residents. There are no minimum professional qualifications, but it can be helpful to have members with experience in environmental science, planning, engineering, or law.

WHAT DOES THE CAC DO?

A CAC can provide information and advice on town policy-making, planning and review of land use proposals. A CAC can conduct a town-wide natural resource and open space inventory and distribute information to town agencies, land use applicants, and the general public.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO THE TOWN?

A CAC can extend the work of the Planning Board and other town agencies and provide thorough, objective analyses of planning issues and the potential impacts of land use decisions.

ARE THERE COSTS INVOLVED WITH HAVING A CAC?

A CAC can operate with little or no budget depending on its goals, the projects it undertakes, and the skills and experience of its members. A CAC can also raise grant funds for projects.



HUDSON VALLEY CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCILS HAVE

Developed a strong advisory role with the planning board in the Town of Hillsdale since being formed more than four years ago. CAC members attend board meetings regularly, visit applicant sites, produce reports on development proposals, and conduct research to inform town policies and planning.

Produced technical reports for the Town of Ancram on topics ranging from vegetated stream buffers and vernal pools to cell phone towers. The Ancram CAC is producing a town-wide biodiversity map and has advocated successfully for resource protection in new zoning revisions. This CAC has been very effective in a short period of time, helped by its members' backgrounds in science, natural resources, and farming, and with strong support from the town board and supervisor.

Prepared a Climate Action Plan for the Town of Red Hook that details different actions that residents, businesses, and government can take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. With the CACs assistance, Red Hook has taken New York State's Climate Smart Communities pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and recently installed solar panels on their town hall with the help of an 80% NYSERDA grant.

Created a GIS system for the Town of Rhinebeck to provide natural resource information to the planning board and prepare site analysis maps for new development proposals. They have created a database of habitat-based recommendations that the planning board uses in their reviews and provides to applicants to help streamline the review process.

