

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REPORT TO TOWN BOARD
April 28, 2025

The Conservation Advisory Committee's activity for April was focused on our participation with the Milton Landing Committee and its celebration of Arbor Day. Our members enjoyed hearing Mr. Tabasco's narration of the history of the Milton Landing Sands Avenue Park. It was gratifying to know that when the site was the location of Shell Oil and then operated by Agway, procedures were rigorously followed to ensure the environmental integrity of its soils and discharges.

We encourage everyone to view and enjoy, as we did, the apple sculptures created by MaARCo. We understand that they will be placed in various locations throughout the Town. They are truly extraordinary and highlight the beauty of our natural surroundings.

Arbor Day provided the perfect opportunity to highlight the native plantings at the Park that were obtained through successful grant applications for the Town. To highlight the tree varieties we placed a copy of a quiz intended to explain the importance of the trees that have been planted at the Park. The questions are posted at the entrance to the dog park. We have ordered signs that will be placed at the trees and shrubs as soon as our vendor can produce them. The markers include the name of the tree or bush and a QR code. By going to the QR code link the reader will get information about the tree and it will give hints to the answers on the quiz. We hope that the public finds the quiz to be fun and informative.

We distributed 70 packets of wildflower seeds and hope that anyone who plants a pollinator garden posts a picture of the garden in bloom to our Facebook page.

In other business, the Town Board was copied on a letter we submitted to the planning Board in reference to the project called Orchards on the Hudson. We are urging the Planning Board to ask for a Full Environmental Impact Study. Once again, we emphasize that the CAC feels that our citizens deserve the opportunity to learn the full impact of the project regarding not only those issues the CAC would be interested in, for example drainage, watershed, lighting, etc., but also the impact on traffic, connectivity, and hamlet businesses. The full Environmental Impact Statement would be helpful in disclosing these facts and we urge the Planning Board to require it. That letter is attached to this report with the request that it is included in the minutes of this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Mici Simonofsky, Chair

Town of Marlborough Conservation Advisory Committee
21 Milton Turnpike, Suite 200
Milton, New York 12547

April 21, 2025

Dear Chairman Brand and Planning Board Members,

The Conservation Advisory Committee (CAC) communicated with this Board in a letter of December 27, 2024 regarding the project called Orchards on Hudson. The CAC once again expresses concern for the environmental impacts this project will have.

The CAC's role is to advise the Town and its agencies on actions that affect the Town's environment. Per New York State's SEQR definition "Environment" means the physical conditions that will be affected by a proposed action, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, noise, resources of agricultural, archeological, historic or aesthetic significance, existing patterns of population concentration, distribution or growth, existing community or neighborhood character, and human health." This is why we have questions for your consideration.

For example, environmental issues appeared with the nearby Bayside project that might be similar to this riverside property. Specifically, are there endangered species that rely on the property's flora, and are there any historical or archaeological artifacts possibly located there? Also, because it was once a quarry, are there soil contaminants there that need mitigating? What will be the impact on air quality with the increased number of vehicles traveling and/or idling along the 9W corridor? How will our waterways be affected? What affect in regards to light pollution will occur?

Marlborough is a Climate Smart Community, so the CAC is also obligated to address the issue of connectivity. As this development is gated, it is essentially a landlocked community. Walking and biking pathways should be provided and encouraged both within and outside the gate. Building and planning should be addressing this in order to provide a healthier approach to mobility, encourage the use of nearby businesses, and reduce the need for auto transportation, noting that carbon emissions are lessened when automobiles are used less. There is a clubhouse and pool, but there are no open spaces for recreational opportunities for the residents of the development. There are no EV charging stations noted on the plan, and no specifics on the type of lighting to be used. The potential light pollution from 103 homes needs to be addressed. Will solar power of any type be incorporated and what types of "green" building recommendations will be utilized? These should align with the intentions of Climate Smart activities.

Another consideration in regards to connectivity is what negative impacts would occur to adjoining and nearby hamlet businesses that the public already relies on for nutritional and cultural needs. For over 15 years the public has relied on a parking lot located on a part of the

proposed development site. Consideration should be given to the economic impact on these established and favorite businesses and also to the economic stability and tax revenue they generate.

It also appears that the developers own parcels along 9W frontage. They will most likely be commercial usages that will be back before the Planning Board in the near future.

Shouldn't the development of these properties also be considered as to how they would relate to the overall traffic, appearance and connectivity for the Orchards on Hudson residents and the general public?

We agree with the letter from Scenic Hudson of November 22 that was addressed to the Town Planning Board with special attention to the several issues related to environmental concerns. We also agree with their recommendations that the Planning Board issue a Positive Declaration so that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) can be prepared. This will provide the Planning Board a full checklist of negative impacts that are likely to occur during and after the construction process.

This project has many positive aspects, and we applaud them. However, its presence will create a permanent change to the quality and character of the hamlet. We only have one chance to provide guidance and prevention of long-term problems.

Our Town Code and Planning procedures do not allow public input until late in the Planning process. The CAC feels that our citizens deserve the opportunity to learn the full impact of the project regarding not only those issues the CAC would be interested in, such as drainage, watershed, lighting, and effect on vegetation and animal habitats, but also the impact on traffic, connectivity, and hamlet businesses. The full Environmental Impact Statement would be helpful in disclosing these facts and we urge you to require it.

Thank you for your consideration. We hope that you find these comments useful and request that they are included in the Planning Board minutes and records.

Respectfully,
Mici Simonofsky, Chair

Town of Marlborough Conservation Advisory Committee
cc: Supervisor Corcoran and Town Board Members