



TOWN OF SHELTER ISLAND
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes

January 6, 2026 - 7:00 pm

The meeting was held in-person and via ZOOM Video Conference

Members Present: Howard Johansen (*Chairperson*), Paulette Van Vranken, Ulrich Armbrust, Peder Larsen

Members Absent: Dan Clark, Chris Tehan, Roxanne Duvivier

Town Officials Present: Liz Hanley (*Councilwoman*)

Attendees Present in Person: None

Attendees Present on Zoom: Pam Demarest

1. Meeting called to order at 7:01 pm.

2. Minutes: Motion to accept November 25, 2025 CAC Meeting Minutes. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

3. Wetlands Application Update

a) Chmelar (Revised Submission) – 13 Dickerson Drive

The CAC approved the original application on December 5, 2024. The revision indicates that all previous comments have been addressed and the project will now involve the reconstruction of existing walls and does not include any work in the Wetlands.

CAC approved the revised application as submitted.

VOTE: 4-0

4. Wetlands Code Final Revisions

CAC has reviewed the proposed legislation and have submitted edits and suggestions. The comments will be compiled as a memo to the Town Board.

Pam Demarest raised concerns about the wetlands code and zoning code, particularly regarding septic systems and setback requirements.

Member Larsen suggested the creation of a preliminary review process where the building department and town officials can jointly evaluate complex wetlands-related projects. This would help address situations where structures were legal when built but no longer comply with current regulations, allowing homeowners to explore situations without immediately going through a full wetlands application process.

5. Nature Preserve Updates

Chairperson Johansen provided an overview of the nature preserves, including Sachem's Woods, where two new wells have been drilled to test water depth. Councilwoman Hanley will follow up with Town Engineer Joe Finora to see if he is able to obtain a report from the USGS.

Members discussed the need for regular property inspections and maintenance, including monitoring for invasive species and ensuring proper marking of property boundaries. Although monumentation was required and surveys exist, the markers are often buried or have become hard to locate over time.

CAC members will begin to walk through the nature preserves and report findings.

6. Lighting/Dark Skies (Chapter 83)

Chairperson Johansen introduced the topic of dark skies and the importance of reducing outdoor lighting to protect nocturnal animals and reduce energy consumption. Members discussed the challenges of enforcing dark skies regulations, including the lack of specialized contractors, and the need for better public education. Resident Pam Demarest suggested that dark skies compliance be incorporated into rental agreements to ensure that those properties meet the necessary standards.

CAC will consider both the Shelter Island and Southold Lighting Codes to determine revisions that can be made, and prepare materials for discussion at the next meeting.

7. Old Business

Councilwoman Hanley reached out to the Town Attorney to discuss zoning/transfer concerns at Mashomack Preserve and will report back to the committee at the next meeting.

Members discussed Sylvester Manor and the restoration of the Manor House, as well as the historical significance and importance of maintaining its integrity during renovations.

8. New Business

Pam Demarest offered to assist with the finalization of the Invasive Plants Species list, to include photographs. Members discussed the importance of addressing invasive species, including Russian Olives, Bittersweet, and Bamboo, and the need for regular property inspections.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:52 pm

Submitted,

Jessica Montgomery, Clerk

Conservation Advisory Council

(Approved 2/3/2026)