

Meeting 12/17/25

Quick recap

The Water Quality Committee meeting focused on discussing a recently submitted grant application for water testing in Stanfordville, with particular attention to how data collection and confidentiality would be handled. The committee explored concerns about protecting private well information while maintaining the voluntary nature of testing, and discussed the broader environmental context of the project which aims to assess watershed quality rather than just individual well conditions. The group also reviewed the grant budget, which allocated approximately \$25,000 for consulting services, and discussed potential educational outreach efforts to inform the community about water quality issues. The conversation ended with plans to organize future stakeholder engagement sessions and to clarify the project's goals and messaging through additional presentations from partner organizations.

Next steps

- Ifetayo: Review the grant application in detail in the next week or so and refresh on specific tasks and timelines for year one, year two, and year three.
- Ifetayo: Add Eileen's email to the shared Google Drive folder containing the grant application documents.
- Julia (or Bernadette, as delegated): Reach out to potential partner organizations (e.g., Rivers Keepers, Hudson River Estuary, Dutchess Land Conservancy, Cary Institute, Shannon Roback, Tara Grogan, Dave Strayer) to schedule presentations or roundtable discussions for the Water Quality Committee and broader stakeholders.
- Julia: Follow up with the woman offering PFAS water testing to get more information for interested committee members.
- Julia: Check in with Carolla, Martina, Eileen, Diane and Ildi regarding their continued participation on the committee.
- Julia: Meet with Bernadette to discuss expectations and have her reach out to committee members regarding continued participation.
- All committee members: Review the grant application and pull out relevant parts for discussion at the next meeting.

Summary

Water Quality Committee Planning Meeting

The Water Quality Committee discussed next steps for the new year and addressed concerns about confidentiality regarding private well testing. The committee reviewed and approved changes to meeting minutes, focusing on rephrasing statements to be more positive and affirming their commitment to confidentiality. Dennis and Eileen highlighted the importance of addressing community concerns about water quality testing and the potential legal implications of revealing private property issues. Ifetayo explained that they would need to follow quality assurance guidelines once the grant is awarded.

Well Water Testing Community Initiative

The group discussed concerns about well water testing and its implications for the community, particularly in relation to the Hudson River watershed. They agreed to rewrite communications to emphasize that testing is voluntary and to focus on the community-wide goal of identifying potential environmental issues. The team also considered holding Zoom meetings with grant partners to explain the project's purpose to different committees, and discussed the need to clarify data privacy and reporting policies during the quality assurance planning phase.

AI Tools for Public Communications

The team discussed the use of AI tools for public-facing communications and agreed to continue using ChatGPT for this purpose. Ifetayo explained that they applied for a water quality monitoring grant, which includes public education components, and shared that all grant documents are available on Google Drive. Eileen inquired about the educational aspects of the grant and expressed concern about the relatively small budget allocation for testing, prompting Ifetayo to offer to share the full grant application and related documents for further review.

Grant Application and Consulting Services

The group discussed a \$75,000 one-time grant application and the associated consulting firm, Tighe & Bond, which would provide services for approximately \$23,000-25,000 including sampling advice, quality assurance, and final report assistance. Eileen raised concerns about the limited budget remaining for water testing after covering the consultant's fees. Dennis explained that the consulting firm was selected because they had worked with neighboring towns and riverkeepers, and were recommended by Dr. Roback. The team had only 10 days to apply for the grant, which they were able to do using information from their recently completed natural resource inventory.

Wappinger Creek Watershed Grant Discussion

The team discussed their grant proposal for environmental monitoring, focusing on connecting their work to the Wappinger Creek watershed and demonstrating regional impact. Dennis explained they are sampling private wells to assess drinking water quality, while emphasizing the broader environmental significance beyond Stanfordville. Eileen noted the importance of framing the project as a community effort and environmental issue, rather than just a local water problem. The group agreed to hold a series of public meetings to better communicate the project's purpose and gather input from town board members, planning board members, and the CAC.

Water Quality and Infrastructure Challenges

The group discussed water quality issues in the business district, where private wells are contaminated and failing health department tests. Dennis explained that while public water and sewer improvements are unlikely, there might be opportunities for grant funding to improve private septic systems in critical watershed areas. Eileen learned that the state currently has a 5-year moratorium on using wastewater treatment fertilizer, which has been linked to higher levels of forever chemicals in private wells, and this data collection could help influence future environmental policies and infrastructure improvements.

Water Quality Monitoring and Planning

The group discussed their water quality monitoring project and grant application, focusing on the need for informed decision-making about water sources and land use planning. They agreed to organize stakeholder meetings and public listening sessions, with plans to invite experts from Rivers Keepers, the Hudson River Estuary program, and other partner organizations to present and share their perspectives. The committee also considered hosting regular bi-monthly presentations to raise awareness and gather community input. They acknowledged the need to move forward with or without the grant, while being mindful of budget constraints and the importance of maintaining affordability for the community.