

**COLUMBIA COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
26 JULY 2010**

PRESENT:

Ed Simonsen, Chairman, Kinderhook
Kathy Schneider, Stuyvesant
Dean Vander Schaaff, Livingston
Karl Gabosh, Austerlitz
Harvey Weber, Copake
Louise Bliss-Keneally, Greenport
Melissa Sorman, Gallatin
Jamie Purinton, Ancram
Dan Marcus, Stockport
Scott Stackpole, Taghkanic
Robert Kessler, Hillsdale
Michael O'Hara, City of Hudson
Karen Mort, Ghent
Deirdre Henderson, Chatham
Theresa Mayhew, Cornell Coop. Ext.

REGRETS:

Kate Cashen, Claverack
Frances Szasz, Germantown

STAFF:

Roland R. Vosburgh, Principal Planner

ABSENT:

John Adams, Canaan
Phil Leonard, Clermont
John Dax, New Lebanon

GUEST:

Fran Martino

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ed Simonsen called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm and noted that a quorum was present (12 out of 19 voting members). Note: Karen Mort arrived at 7:15 pm and Deirdre Henderson arrived at 7:30 pm which raised the quorum to 14 out of 19 voting members).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the May 2010 EMC meeting were approved as written on a motion by Harvey Weber and seconded by Michael O'Hara. Vote: All in favor. The unofficial meeting notes for the June 2010 EMC meeting were approved as written on a motion by Harvey Weber and seconded by Michael O'Hara. Vote: All in favor.

SPECIAL SPEAKER

Chairman Ed Simonsen introduced Fran Martino, the facilitator for the Greater Stockport Creek Watershed Alliance. Fran Martino thanked the EMC for the invitation and said that she was

attending to provide an overall description of the Greater Stockport Creek Watershed Alliance and to encourage EMC completion of watershed surveys she distributed last spring.

Ms. Martino highlighted the Greater Stockport Creek Watershed Alliance as:

- Started the project three years ago under the auspices of the Hudson Basin River Watch
- Initial focus was on the Kinderhook Creek, but the outfall of the Kinderhook Creek and Claverack Creek watersheds is the short Stockport Creek in the Town of Stockport so the name was change
- Funding is through the NYSDEC's Hudson River Estuary Program and Columbia/Greene sportsmen groups
- Hudson River Estuary Action Plan has one mission statement focusing on tributaries
- Stockport Creek is the second largest tributary to the Hudson River with 1,077 stream miles
- Distributed a handout showing the % of each town located within the watershed (includes portions of Massachusetts, Rensselaer County, as well as Columbia County.
- Distributed a handout with project mission statement
- A Greater Stockport Watershed Alliance website will go public in September (www.stockportwatershed.org)
- Project encourages data collection on stream characteristics using the protocols used by the Hudson Basin River Watch
- Project is seeking volunteers to act as "stream spotters" to get citizens to collect stream data (e.g. temperature) and submit data to the website
- Watershed report cards are developed, the Kinderhook Watershed (2006) report was distributed
- An advisory group was created by Ms. Martino last year and meets monthly at the Crosswinds of Hudson community room, Hudson. She welcomed any interested EMC members to attend the next meeting on 7/28/10.
- Maps showing the watershed boundaries and other features (to be on the website) were shown.
- A blue backed highway sign, approved by NYSDEC and NYSDOT, will be installed at major highways where they cross the watershed boundary. Text is: "Entering Stockport Creek Watershed", "Hudson River Estuary", and the sturgeon logo which is used throughout the Hudson River estuary. The signs cost \$35 and DOT will install them.
- The Alliance is not an advocacy group, but more of a cheerleader for the streams and watershed.
- The Alliance cooperated with the DEC's Trees for Tribs program which planted trees along the Kinderhook Creek in the Town of Chatham.
- The Alliance has been involved with outreach to the public and local governments, most recently in the Town of Taghkanic.

- Stream assessments are conducted (Tier 1, 2, or 3) which involve taking samples of physical characteristics and biological/chemical characteristics
- She encouraged EMC members to complete the stream survey for their towns. She is basically looking for any anecdotal information, don't worry about the technical questions. She has conducted a literature search to document what data already exists on water quality in the watershed.

During the discussion that followed the following comments/suggestions were made:

- Include summaries of the data found in the literature search on the website
- Suggestions for data to collect and show on the watershed maps included dams, impoundments, and waste outfalls
- Terri Mayhew's educational video, "We All Live In a Watershed" was recommended for use in the public outreach

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Ed Simonsen reported that he attended the full day DEC/EMC/CAC program update meeting in Albany on 7/26/10 (Roland Vosburgh attended the morning portion). This is an annual meeting at which EMC and Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) members from around NYS are briefed on environmental programs by NYSDEC staff in Albany. It is open to all EMCs and CACs, whether or not they are members of their state associations. Chairman Simonsen was very impressed with the amount of information presented on the DEC budget, the supplemental EIS on hydro-fracking used in oil and gas drilling, community character, invasive species, climate change, SEQRA revisions and critical environmental areas (CEAs) and the knowledge and zeal of the attendees. He also mentioned the two state associations sponsor an annual conference on the environment which for this year will be held on 11/19-21/10 at Hotel Thayer at West Point. Roland Vosburgh will send EMC members a link to the NYSACCs website which will contain conference information.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

OLD BUSINESS

1) Air Monitoring Station

Kathy Schneider reported that the DEC air monitoring station at the Stuyvesant Town Hall was shut down after only 11 months due to the air conditioner broke down and apparently DEC will not repair the air conditioner due to budget constraints. She said that the community in the northwest portion of the county has long been concerned about mercury emissions from the Lafarge Cement plant in Ravena. Whether the air monitoring station, designed to collect particulate emissions data, could be further analyzed for mercury content was not clear. Some EMC members thought that DEC air engineer Don Spencer had stated in 2008 that this was

possible, if it was requested to be analyzed, while others thought that only particulates were analyzed. She reported that this topic was raised at a recent Stuyvesant Town Board meeting and many citizens urged the Town Board to call for the air monitoring station to be repaired and continue to collect data, since the summer weather in 2009 was wet and cool compared to this year's summer dry and hot conditions. There is also a fear that the station will be removed by DEC. Karl Gabosh added that since the Lafarge cement plant has been operating at only 65% capacity recently, that this would not reflect emissions conditions if the plant operated at full capacity. There was a suggestion that the EMC could recommend to the Board of Supervisors that they call for DEC to repair the station and continue to monitor for particulates and mercury, if possible. It was finally decided that the EMC find out whether the Town of Stuyvesant or the County is already pursuing any action at this time and to contact Don Spencer to clarify the status and capabilities of the station. Roland Vosburgh will investigate to get more information for the EMC.

2) *Speaker Series*

The EMC decided to schedule Gretchen Stevens, biologist with Hudsonia, to speak in September on the topic: biodiversity conservation and local land use decisions. Two possible dates were selected; 9/27/10 or 9/28/10 and the location will be the Taconic Hills High School cafeteria. Harvey Weber volunteered to get the paperwork for room reservation. Scott Stackpole and Melissa Sorman volunteered to work on publicity. Roland Vosburgh will handle meeting announcement distribution to local government officials.

3) *Comprehensive Plan Reviews*

Chairman Simonsen asked that everyone who has completed their comprehensive plan review forward their comments to Dan Marcus who will compile the results. Dan Marcus will email Chairman Simonsen a list of those plan reviews he has already received.

NEW BUSINESS

Terri Mayhew reported that the CC Lakes Coalition met today at Copake Lake. This is an annual meeting for all CC lake association members and today's meeting included Rebecca Schneider, Cornell University, speaking on rain gardens, shoreline management, and overall best practices to prevent water quality impacts from adjacent property. There was a lake tour which allowed participants to view examples of both good and bad shoreline management practices.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Minutes prepared by:

Roland R. Vosburgh, Principal Planner