

**COLUMBIA COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

**UNOFFICIAL MEETING NOTES
22 JUNE 2009**

PRESENT:

Ed Simonsen, Temporary Chair, Kinderhook
Karl Gabosh, Austerlitz
Kate Cashen, Claverack
Harvey Weber, Temp. Vice Chair, Copake
Deirdre Henderson, Chatham
Dean Vander Schaaff, Livingston
Dan Marcus, Stockport
John Adams, Canaan
Karen Mort, Ghent
Ed Van Nostrand, CC DOH

REGRETS:

Melissa Sorman, Gallatin
Mark Burch, Stuyvesant
Ed Nabozny, Greenport
Robert Kessler, Hillsdale
Frances Szasz, Germantown
Theresa Mayhew, CCE

STAFF:

Roland R. Vosburgh, Principal Planner

CALL TO ORDER

Temporary Chairman Ed Simonsen called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm and noted that a quorum was not present (only 9 out of 19 members) to conduct official business. Those present agreed to conduct an unofficial meeting and proceed with the agenda. Mr. Simonsen announced that following the unofficial meeting, the Energy Committee would meet. Harvey Weber noted that the Water Committee needs to meet now that former committee chairman Tony LaSalvia has stepped down from the EMC.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

In the absence of a quorum, the approval of the draft EMC minutes for the 1 June 2009 meeting was postponed. Dean Vander Schaaff noted one correction: the addition of Frances Szasz to the list of members present. R. Vosburgh will make such correction.

OLD BUSINESS

Committee Reports:

1) Copake Environmental Issues Committee

This committee was set up at the last EMC meeting following the presentation on the on-going issue of environmental and town law violations and proposed farm operations at the Cascino property in the Town of Copake. Co-Chairman Dan Marcus reported that since this matter was

in the courts (temporary restraining order) at the time of the NYS Department of Ag & Markets (NYSDAM) letter on the proposed farm operation, it is his position that the matter needs to be handled by the courts. He believes that after reviewing Ag & Markets Law, that NYS Environmental Conservation Law would trump Ag & Markets Law vis a vis compliance with state environmental laws and regulations.

Further discussion raised the following issues:

- The committee name; “Copake Environmental Issues Committee” implies the focus is on the specifics of the Copake issues, but the consensus of the discussion on 6/1/09 was to focus on the more generic policy ramifications for harmonizing environmental and agricultural goals in a county wide context.
- When this matter was first brought to the EMC, there was incomplete information about the issues and the court’s involvement and had this been available perhaps the EMC would have taken a different route. It was suggested that when EMC members bring matters to the attention of the full EMC, that all details and specifics be presented.

Following the discussion, the consensus was that it had been premature to form the committee and it was decided to disband the committee at the next meeting with a quorum of members.

2) *Temporary Chairman Report*

Temp. Chairman Simonsen reported on several matters:

- **Membership:** Temp. Chairman Simonsen was unsuccessful reaching the Ancram supervisor but did speak with the New Lebanon supervisor about the need to nominate a member to represent their towns. New Lebanon is currently working on securing a nominee. Mr. Vosburgh also reported that Taghkanic is vacant and with the expiration of Matt de la Houssaye’s term last week, the City of Hudson is currently vacant.
- **Energy Report:** Temp. Chairman Simonsen discussed procedures for securing full Board of Supervisors approval of the Energy Report. One outgrowth of this conversation was that the approved Energy Report was emailed to all BOS members with a short note from Temp. Chairman Simonsen.
- **Lafarge Cement Co. Community Liaison Committee:** Temp. Chairman Simonsen reported having a conversation with John Regan of Lafarge Cement Co. and they would be happy to have an EMC member on the committee. Mr. Simonsen provided the name of Karl Gabosh as the EMC representative. Karl Gabosh reported the company has contacted him and offered to give him a tour of the cement facility in Ravena.
- **Air Monitoring Station:** Temp. Chairman Simonsen was unable to reach Stuyvesant Supervisor Bertram but did speak with Town Councilman Ron Knott who said issues surrounding payment from NYS to National Grid to make the electric connection were recently resolved and power may be hooked up this week. Mr. Simonsen also said that he has learned of a NYS Department of Transportation study regarding air quality in the

northern part of the county whose focus is on automobile emissions. There was concern that the air monitoring station might be moved before a full year of data was available due to the delay in getting the unit operational. There was concern that it was not clear how and to whom data from the unit would be shared. Mr. Vosburgh agreed to contact NYSDEC Region 4 to clarify the time frame and data reporting protocol and report back to the EMC. Kate Cashen volunteered to contact NYSDEC on a monthly basis to get a report, if that would be helpful.

NEW BUSINESS

1) EMC sponsorship of speaker presentations

Discussion on how the EMC might implement the idea of having four EMC sponsored speakers at different locations around the county each year. Deirdre Henderson reported that SunDog Solar held a family day recently and among the booths was one for International Council for Local Environmental Initiative (ICLEI) and they had a copy of the EMC energy report. Ed Simonsen announced that an informational meeting on outdoor wood fired boilers would be held on 6/22/09 at the Kinderhook Village Hall where Glen Smith (local building inspector) would be presenting. Mr. Simonsen also said that he would like to see comparable fuel data (mass balance) for natural gas, oil, and wood to be considered in policies impacting space heating fuels. Mr. Simonsen also reported that Fran Martino, Kinderhook Watershed Alliance, would be one potential speaker. Harvey Weber suggested Steve Winkley (NY Rural Water) and Mr. Reynolds at US Geological Survey office in Albany. Deirdre Henderson recommended the person heading up Governor Patterson's smart growth office (Randi Walker would know who to contact). John Adams said that he had forwarded information to Mr. Simonsen about Climate Smart Communities program and a speaker on this topic would be good. Deirdre Henderson hopes that these four annual meetings will also get the word out about the EMC to the public and result in more partnering with local environmental groups. Mr. Weber suggested using the schools as meeting locations. He asked all members to think about and suggest potential speakers and then asked for volunteers to help organize this concept. Deirdre Henderson and Karen Mort agreed to work together. John Adams volunteered to look into the Climate Smart Initiative of NYSDEC.

2) EMC reporting mechanism

Temporary Chairman Simonsen still thinks that there is a need to clarify the procedure for EMC to secure BOS support for its work and recommendations. He wants to be sure that EMC recommendations get to the full BOS and not stop with a committee. He encouraged all members to carefully read ECL Article 47 regarding the powers and duties of EMCs.

3) Agenda format

Temporary Chairman Simonsen noted that it would help the work of the EMC to have a mechanism to keep track of agenda items discussed at past meetings, e.g. “pending issues” so that they would not be forgotten.

4) Promoting efficiency in topic discussions

Temporary Chairman Simonsen asked that members think about suggestions to promote efficiency in topic discussions. He said that artificial time limits for discussion were difficult to set. Ms. Henderson suggested we try time estimates on the agenda and have a time keeper. Karl Gabosh thought the practice of a full EMC meeting followed by EMC committee meetings was very productive and facilitated the members meeting together.

5) Plastics recycling practice

This topic was raised initially by Dan Marcus. Temporary Chairman Simonsen explained that Jolene Race, Director of CC Solid Waste Department, spoke at the September 2007 EMC meeting and explained that the county had a 20 year lease with a recycling firm that was not able to handle all kinds of plastics. He thinks that all plastics should be required to be recycled and if they are impossible to recycle, the plastic should not be able to be produced. Dan Marcus visited Washington and Oregon recently and these states require recycling of plastics in categories 1-7, while only plastics with 1 or 2 stamped on them are able to be recycled in the county. There was interest in the EMC having input to the next recycling contract for the county. Mr. Simonsen advocated for more public knowledge and understanding of chemistry so that government policy can be made on facts. John Adams added that the public needs to understand why they need to learn more as well.

6) Other

Temporary Chairman Simonsen announced that a Smart Growth Alliance meeting would be held in Poughkeepsie on 6/30/09 (meeting announcement was emailed to EMC members).

Harvey Weber passed around photos of the materials collected at the annual Copake clean up day which are currently stored at the town highway garage site. He said he had concerns about possible environmental impacts from the storage. Temporary Chairman Simonsen advised him that this was a local town issue that should be addressed by town officials.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Unofficial Meeting Notes prepared by:

Roland R. Vosburgh, Principal Planner