

**COLUMBIA COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
UNOFFICIAL MEETING NOTES
28 JUNE 2010**

PRESENT:

Ed Simonsen, Chairman, Kinderhook
Robert Kessler, Hillsdale
Scott Stackpole, Taghkanic
Kate Cashen, Claverack
John Dax, New Lebanon
Theresa Mayhew, Cornell Coop. Ext.
Kathy Schneider, Stuyvesant
Melissa Sorman, Gallatin
Deirdre Henderson, Chatham
Lisa Bliss-Keneally, Greenport
Dan Marcus, Stockport nominee

REGRETS:

John Adams, Canaan
Karen Mort, Ghent
Harvey Weber, Copake
Karl Gabosh, Austerlitz
Jamie Purinton, Ancram

ABSENT:

Phil Leonard, Clermont
Frances Szasz, Germantown
Dean Vander Schaaff, Livingston
Ed Van Nostrand, CCDOH
Michael O'Hara, Hudson

STAFF:

Roland R. Vosburgh, Principal Planner

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ed Simonsen called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and noted that a quorum to conduct official business was lacking (8 out of 19 voting members). One member arrived at 7:25 pm, but a quorum of 10 out of 19 voting members was still not present. The members present agreed to hold an unofficial meeting. Therefore the approval of the draft May EMC minutes was postponed. Roland R. Vosburgh noted that Dan Marcus's term had expired, he was re-nominated by the Town of Stockport, the committee of the Board of Supervisors (BOS) had approved his appointment, and the full BOS was expected to approve Mr. Marcus at the July BOS meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

1) Hudson River water quality for swimming report

Chairman Simonsen found the recently released report by the Riverkeeper of interest. Kathy Schneider noted there was no data concerning the stretch of river near the City of Hudson.

2) Dutchess Co. Planning Federation newsletter

Chairman Simonsen noted the issue on water quality protection (based upon Chazen Cos. Study) and thought the recommended regulations were impressive.

AGENDA

1) Speakers Series

Chairman Simonsen reported he had not received any updates from Deirdre Henderson but still hoped that the first EMC sponsored public information session would be held in September. Bob Kessler said that Gretchen Stevens, a scientist with Hudsonia, had agreed to be a speaker. Kate Cashen noted that the Taconic Hills school can provide meeting space (at no cost) and only requires updated paperwork and copy of the county's insurance certificate. Bob Kessler agreed to contact Ms. Stevens about topics she could address (e.g. invasive species, habitat issues). Another meeting location suggested was the new Hillsdale Library on Rt. 22, but exact opening date was unknown. This is a "green" building design and meeting there would allow this aspect to be showcased to the public. Outreach to interested groups should be made once the date, speaker, and topic are finalized. Scott Stackpole volunteered to assist with writing a press release. Deirdre Henderson arrived at this point and reported that someone from NYS DEC Climate Smart Communities program had agreed to speak at an EMC public meeting. She noted that the best time for them would be late September.

2) Website

Chairman Simonsen reported that the EMC website was updated and now includes all approved EMC minutes and links to the EMC reports on energy and outdoor wood boilers.

3) NYSAEMC Membership

Roland R. Vosburgh reported that staff had contacted the NYSAEMC treasurer about paperwork requirements to process the voucher so that the EMC could join the association, but still no response.

4) Comprehensive Plan Reviews

Dan Marcus said he would compile a side by side comparison of the comp plan reviews conducted by members, but he does not have all of the reviews. Chairman Simonsen told him to go ahead with what he has currently and the May EMC minutes included a list of town comp plans that have been reviewed to date.

5) Greater Stockport Creek Watershed Alliance

Kathy Schneider noted that Fran Martino had sent an email survey out for all EMC members to complete for their towns. Roland R. Vosburgh clarified that Fran only sent the survey out to EMC members who agreed to share their email addresses, so not all members have received the survey. Ms. Schneider noted that the survey is not easy to complete and a map from Ms. Martino showing the watershed boundary would be helpful. She offered to assist any other EMC member with completing the survey for their town. Chairman Simonsen noted that in Kinderhook there are three local governments, the town and two villages to contend with. The consensus of the members was to invite Ms. Martino to speak at the next EMC meeting about the Stockport Creek Watershed Alliance initiative. Ms. Schneider agreed to contact Ms. Martino.

6) NYS DEC Regulation of OWBs

Chairman Simonsen wondered if anyone had received any feedback after the EMC distributed information to local governments on NYSDEC proposed regulations of outdoor wood fired

boilers (OWBs). Kate Cashen said that the NY Farm Bureau was very opposed to the proposed regulations on behalf of farmers and rural landowners. Deirdre Henderson thought it unlikely that the proposed regulations would be adopted in their present form and DEC would spend several months reviewing public comments and then make revisions, which probably would not be released before the end of the year. Chairman Simonsen learned that there was very strong opposition at the Albany public hearing and much was centered on the regulation of existing OWBs.

7) *Email list*

There is still some confusion over whether members are on the shared email list or not.

8) *Cell Towers*

Melissa Sorman reported that Jamie Purinton was unable to attend due to Ancram meeting this same evening on two proposed cell tower sites.

9) *EMC Public Relations ideas*

Chairman Simonsen recalled that a couple EMC members indicated interest in getting the word out about the EMC. Press releases on the EMC speakers series and possibly letters to the editor outreach might be tried. Chairman Simonsen explained that he discussed the protocol for press releases with Commissioner Ken Flood and was informed that such outreach did not require BOS committee approval when it was purely of an informational nature. The case of publicizing EMC positions and recommendations came up. Roland R. Vosburgh reminded the EMC that they are advisors to the BOS and it would be inappropriate to release recommendations and positions to the general public before presenting them to the BOS. Extending this courtesy to the BOS would avoid damaging the EMC credibility, Mr. Vosburgh added.

10) *Other Comments*

Kate Cashen reported that the County received grant funding from the NYS Department of Ag & Markets to prepare a county ag and farmland protection plan. There is a draft plan which will serve as a starting point and a kick-off event is planned for later this summer. Todd Erling, CEDC, is heading up the effort which involves outreach to communities on local ag and farmland protection efforts (e.g. Town of Chatham).

Melissa Sorman recommended Conrad Vispo's article in the Columbia Paper on Columbia County ecological regions.

Deirdre Henderson announced that the Farmscape Ecology Program would host an open house at their new offices at the Hawthorne Valley Farm.

The unofficial meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Unofficial meeting notes prepared by:
Roland R. Vosburgh, Principal Planner

