ULSTER COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Dave Haldeman, Chair
Kristen Schara, Vice-Chair
Neil Rindlaub, Secretary

Meeting Minutes

Regular Monthly Meeting ***May 31, 6:30 PM***

Hybrid Meeting Via Zoom **and in-person at the Ulster County Restorative Justice Center, 733 Broadway, Kingston NY**

"The purpose of the Council shall be to review and advise the county and local governments on present and proposed methods of using, protecting and conserving the environment for the benefit of all the people."

With a quorum present, the regular meeting of the Ulster County Environmental Council was convened at 6:35 p.m.

Municipal Members Present	David Haldeman, Chair (Shawangunk) Rob Ferri (New Paltz) Kristen Schara (Hurley) Mark Ellison (Esopus) James Easley (Rochester) Laura Hartmann (Town of Ulster) Neil Rindlaub (Gardiner)
At-Large Members Present	Bill More
Members Present via Videoconference	Bob Cruickshank Simon Strauss
Ulster County Staff	Nick Hvozda, Department of the Environment Europa McGovern, DoE
Guests	Peter Karis – OSI Jen Metzger – County Executive

A link to the meeting agenda can be found here: https://ulstercountyny.gov/environmental-management-council/emc-meeting-dates-minutes

Discussion/Approval of Minutes

Dave Haldeman noted that we could not approve the April 26 minutes because we lacked a quorum

Introduction of Speaker/Presentation

Jen Metzger opened her remarks by saying she has had a long-time interest in climate and environmental issues and is currently devoting considerable effort to implementing New York State climate law. Ulster County is Silver Certified as a NYS **Climate Smart Community**, and achieving health and economic

benefits from emissions reductions.

Currently the County is assessing the feasibility of installing onsite solar panels to help power County buildings and considering battery backup systems and distributed energy systems to manage demand and supply. The County is working towards electrification of Ulster County Area Transport (UCAT) buses and the County vehicle fleet with a goal of 100% EVs by 2035.

The County is looking to reduce the solid waste stream, with the goal of composting 100% of organic waste by 2030, starting with compost collection bins in County buildings. There is currently a food scraps collection pilot in two County buildings; the County Office Building and the Development Court complex. The County is also working efforts to put the onus on producers of packaging to recycle their materials through Extended Producer Responsibility. The County has initiated Climate Corps, a paid summer internship for young people to support county agencies and school districts in climate efforts. The Ulster County Legislature has updated procurement policies to reduce plastic consumption and use recycled paper products, in conjunction with the NYS Green Purchasing Program. The County Purchasing Department and Department of the Environment are assisting in a sustainable purchasing program effort.

New County housing must meet "Green" standards and the County is looking for ways to support energy audits and help low-income residents install better household insulation. The County is supporting a new Workforce Innovation Center for green jobs training at IPark 87, in partnership with SUNY New Paltz and SUNY Ulster. Central Hudson is engaged in the rate setting process, with June and July the time for public input. Emergency services in the County are being challenged by lithium battery fires and are learning how to respond effectively.

Bill More raised the issue of solar farms displacing productive farm land. Ms. Metzger responded that the County is looking to site solar panels on brownfields and parking lots.

Our next speaker, Peter Karis, VP for parks and stewardship at the Open Space institute described various past and current OSI projects in Ulster County and beyond. He is working on "Growing Greenways," a 250 mile network of connected trails. Part of that is developing the O&W rail trail that would connect Kingston with Port Jervis.

Announcements

None

Department of the Environment Update

Nick Hvozda will be leaving the UC Dept. of the Environment to work for the NY State Power Authority. Europa McGovern will be the Interim Director.
Scheduling – the July 26 EMC presentation will be on the County NRI. No meeting in August.
MS4 – The Dept. has hosted meetings on storm water permit requirements.
UCRRA – collected 92,000 lbs. of hazardous waste in the spring program.
Consolidated Funding Portal – this Dept. webpage shows grant sources for environmental initiatives.
Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation – FEMA funding was used to identify risks and offer hazard reduction strategies – 6 town supervisors attended a meeting.

Catskills – the DEC is hiring a consultant to provide strategies to better manage Park visitation and overuse

Planning Department Update

No update.

Old Business

None

New Business

Dave Haldeman asked if anyone knew why sycamore trees look so stressed?
Dave also brought up the question of how a recent US Supreme Court ruling will affect wetland regulation in NY State?
Dave is looking to bring James Taylor, a biomass expert, in as a guest speaker

Council Member Roundabout

None

Next meeting: July 26 at 6:30 PM at the Restorative Justice Center, 733 Broadway, Kingston

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM

Respectfully submitted
Neil Rindlaub
Secretary