

Ulster County EMC Draft Meeting Notes May 27, 2015

Members in Attendance:

John Sansalone, Gardiner

Mary O'Donnell, Saugerties

Jim Littlefoot, New Paltz

Amanda Lavalley, UC Dept of the Environment

Ann Brandt, Woodstock

Emilie Hauser, Kingston

Kristen Schara, At Large, Hurley

The meeting was called to order at 6:39 PM.

Ulster County Dept. of Environment Update

Alanna Henneberry, Deputy Director of UC Dept. of the Environment has updated the EMC website. The address is UCenvironment.org. Meeting minutes and agendas and information on events and programs such as Solarize and Creek Week are listed there. Anyone who is interested can register on it to receive updates and changes as they are posted. The UC Recreation website, REConnect.gov, is awaiting approval to add a Facebook page. The website displays a large amount of information about UC recreation facilities, trails, parks and tourism. It will be viewable on mobile devices. An email was sent to all UC employees on Earth Day with a link to the REConnect website. Amanda will send out links to EMC members for these websites.

The Solarize campaign is underway. It is a bulk buying program. It is currently only available in Kingston but will expand to other interested municipalities in UC. EMC members are encouraged to promote the program to their municipal officials. Amanda provided a cost matrix to showing the pricing tiers. The price could go down to \$3.10 per watt based on the amount of installations purchased. This does not include federal tax credits and NYSERDA incentives. On-bill financing is available through Central Hudson. John Wackman is available to present the program to CAC's and municipalities. Contact him at (646) 302 5853 or www.solarize-hudsonvalley.com. The current residential tax credits are scheduled to expire. The Solarize kickoff meeting in Kingston was well attended. There will be tours on June 6th 1-4 PM of houses with solar installations including Emilie's house.

Five electrical vehicle charging stations have been installed at UC facilities so far: the Office Building, Golden Hill Health Care Center, DPW, Social Services Department Offices, and the UC Courthouse. Large solar installations are planned at the former town of Ulster landfill and at UCCC. All UC busses are running on biodiesel.

UC Legislature Update

- A resolution was adopted to authorize the UC Executive to enter into the contract with NYCDEP to create a trail along the Ashokan Reservoir.
- A Green Fleet policy is being formulated by the Energy and Environment Committee to ensure that new purchases will enhance environmental sustainability.
- The Polystyrene ban was filed with NYS and will go into effect Nov. 1 in UC for chain store food service establishments, UC sponsored events, and UC permitted events. It will apply to other food service establishments such as nursing homes, hospitals, non-profits and local restaurants as of May 1, 2016. Packing peanuts and trays for raw meat are exempt. The UC Health Dept. is expected to notify establishments. Direct mailing will go to all those covered by the NYS Agriculture and Markets Department. A waiver is available if applied for and approved for those that determine the law is a financial burden. The ultimate goal is migrate to compostable containers.

New Business

Amanda suggested a workshop to train municipal officials and volunteers on how to reduce their institutional carbon footprint in a step by step manner. Julia Walsh, a community organizer who works on energy issues could lead it. Elected officials, CAC members, county officials and others would be invited. Possible topics include enhancing energy efficiency of current operations and equipment, purchasing energy efficient vehicles, retrofitting with LED lights, washing with cold water using ozone systems, onsite renewable energy installations, and purchasing renewable energy credits. The workshop could be live streamed and/or stored as a webinar for later viewing. Timing is an issue. Julia suggested doing it in August, before the fall.

Member Roundabout

John Sansalone – Gardiner continues to work on a wetland/watercourse law. They are meeting with attorney twice a week to finalize it. Their goal is to have final draft available to the town board by the end of June or July. They are working on details such as definitions, cutting in a buffer area, where to draw the line, and invasive species removal. Next week at the spring conference NYWEA will have the operators challenge. The latest issue of their magazine, *Clear Waters*, has articles on disinfection which may be of interest. Refer to their website, www.nywea.org for more info. Contact them to get copies. An article in the *New York Times* titled "Fighting Plastic Bead Pollution" states that 4 states have banned microbeads. Other states are considering. Also in the *Times*, there was an editorial on expanding PCB cleanup in the Hudson. John contacted NYWEA to join campaign to support the effort.

Mary O'Donnell – At the latest CAC meeting, they voted not to advise the Town Board to support PCB cleanup. One of CAC members talked to 2 people living on the river who did not want it. CAC not have consensus on conservation easements. Some members are worried about reducing the tax base. Currently 6% of the town is open space. (Suggestion - Scenic Hudson might be able to help with their own planner to speak about economic value of open space. Also the Land Trust Alliance has a good website to explain easements.)

The Hudson River Summit was very well attended. The focus was to encourage collaborations among river towns to implement the Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda. There are 2 grants for public access and another for river bank restoration due by June 15th.

Kristen Schara – The CAC is looking to work with the West Hurley Fire department to acquire a section of the land being sold by the Onteora School District at the West Hurley School for a park/playground. There is funding available for this. (John- There may be environmental issues with that land that does not allow the soil to be disturbed.)

Anne Brandt– The WEC participated in an introduction to CAC's for the Green County Land Trust and other Greene County municipalities. The goal is to encourage the establishment of CACs in Greene County. The NYS Conference on the Environment to be held in Ithaca, Oct 15-17. There will DEC conduct an update seminar in Albany at DEC HQ on June 8, 9:30-4. Climate Smart Communities, Invasive Species, Great Lakes areas of concern, are some of the topics to be covered. Contact Maria Katchmar at Katchmar@dec.ny.gov.

WEC is working on a draft letter to area DOT's encouraging them to be careful with mowing. Areas used by bees and Monarch Butterflies are being destroyed. Private landowners who have open fields should be encouraged to plant milkweed. NYDEP will not be using Roundup around the reservoir. Town of Woodstock issues letters to NYDEC, DOT, etc. to discourage roadside spraying. Oslo Norway is setting aside open areas for bees.

Emilie Hauser - A lot of publications about butterfly gardens are available. Yard chemicals are a major source of water pollution. It is illegal to spray at an institution, such as a school, without a permit. The CAC has most of their geospatial data entered by an intern from SUNY. They are going to apply for an estuary grant to interpret

the data. The comprehensive plan should be ready be soon. The Hudson River Comprehensive Restoration Plan might be of interest to towns on the river. The CAC can identify things to conserve or restore (protecting wetlands, sewage treatment, etc.). There is a nice guide for CACs from Westchester County. Rolling terms of office are helpful for continuity of committees. The CAC are looking at a plastic bag ban. A resolution supporting continued PCB dredging was passed by the Common Council

Jim Littlefoot – The New Paltz ECB has requested permission from the town board to hire a professional grant writer. It might be possible to share with neighboring communities.

Meeting adjourned 8:27.