

# Ulster County EMC Meeting Minutes April 27, 2016

## Members in Attendance:

Dave Haldeman (Chair), Shawangunk

John Sansalone, Gardiner

William A. More, At Large, Kingston

Kristen Schara, At Large, Hurley

Emilie Hauser, Kingston

Amanda LaValle and Alanna Henneberry, UC Dept. of the Environment

Virginia Starke, Hurley

Ann Brandt, Woodstock

Jim Littlefoot, New Paltz

Guests: Christie DeBoer, Executive Director, Wallkill Valley Land Trust; Danyelle Davis, Rosendale ECC;

Judith Karpova and Tim Ganon, Rochester ECC; Jim Mays, Olive

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM.

## **Wallkill Valley Land Trust (WVLT)**

The WVLT was started 29 years ago. It currently holds 34 easements (1,999 ac) in the 8 towns that they serve including 3 CSA's, many farms, and residences. Some are third generation easement land owners. They also own 7 "fee lands" (360 ac) outright including the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail extension and trestle. They check each easement every year for compliance. All communications to perspective buyers of easement lands are in writing. The land trust partners with the Open Space Institute and Scenic Hudson, and uses grants from them and other organizations. They operate with 11 volunteer board members 2 staff, and 1 land steward. They will accept easements starting at 10 ac. Income and property tax incentives are now permanent and there has been dramatic increased interest in easements. The land trusts in UC are working toward a county wide group to address common issues. The WVLT is contracted by the towns of New Paltz and Rochester to do current condition reports and monitoring of town owned easements. They host many events for fundraising and community outreach.

William motioned to approve the March minutes as amended. Motion seconded by John. Motion carried unanimously.

## **Dept. of the Environment Report**

As a part of the STRIVE program at the new Kingston Center of SUNY Ulster, the green wall was planted with cold hardy perennials. The DEC had a ribbon cutting ceremony at the new public access site along the Lower Esopus. It is located near Washington Ave behind Quick Check and provides a platform for fishing and a car top boat launch. It is ADA accessible. They had a free fishing day last week. The new NYS budget provides significant funding for climate change and adaptation projects. Climate Smart certified communities can apply for up to \$2 million. Grants are available to become a climate smart community. The draft EMC annual report for 2015 was distributed at the meeting.

## **New Business**

There is a bill in the assembly requiring pharmacies to take back unused pharmaceuticals. CAC's can suggest a resolution of support from their town boards. Pharmacies contend that funding is an obstacle. There are 3 counties in the country that do this. They require pharmaceutical manufacturers to pay program costs in order to sell their products. Dave will look into the EMC's role in supporting this through the UC legislature.

## **Old Business**

**Omega Institute Retreat** - The EMC retreat will take place on May 6-7. A schedule was emailed to EMC members. Alanna handed out a packet including charters for CAC's and EMC's and survey questions, a list of other EMC websites in the state for comparison for review prior to the retreat.

## **Member Roundabout**

Tim Ganon - The grant for the open space inventory with Wawarsing was awarded. They had clean-up events for Earth Day. The ECC is working to determine who will represent them on the EMC.

Danyelle Davis – The ECC is performing a GIS review of the Pilgrim Pipeline route including a buffer analysis to look for potential impacts. They plan to submit it to the town for the EIS. Solar energy installers are seeking easements for community solar facilities. An MS4 workshop is scheduled. They plan to make creative ads to show at the Rosendale Theater for educational outreach on MS4 issues.

John Sansalone – The ECC met with town supervisor to resolve issues regarding areas of responsibility. The NYWEA Government Affairs Committee is tracking bills introduced to the NYS Legislature including: Testing private wells when a property is sold (an analysis of levels of chemicals such as VOCS, lead, nitrates, nitrites would be performed by a certified testing lab); Reportable oil spills to require a certified letter from the DEC to municipalities and homeowners within a ½ mile radius ( it could apply to car accidents, customer spills at gas stations, etc. – a threshold level is suggested) ; Net metering of electricity at water resource recovery plants to encourage the use of biogas and solar generation. The presence of disposable wipes in waste water streams is causing clogs in treatment plant machinery. The town wants to limit sharing of reusable items left at the transfer station.

Emilie Hauser – Concerns have been raised about development at the roundabout in town of Ulster which is mostly in a floodplain. The sites are adding fill in order to be raised out of the floodplain. The nearby levee is being reevaluated to protect the existing businesses. The CAC continues to work on their NRI and is studying the wood fires issue. Central Hudson is conducting a clean up the former manufactured gas plant on the Rondout Creek. The process includes scraping the top layers of soil, mixing the soil with concrete up to a depth of 22 feet, dredging and capping the sediments in the creek, and capping the gas line. The DEC has been working to clean up all of the former coal gasification plants in the state. Large quantities of coal tar mixed with ash including VOCs, VAHs and heavy metals were left behind. There are 200 sites in the state. A common council committee met with Kate Hudson from Riverkeeper about the Pilgrim Pipeline.

Kristen Schara – The Hurley CAC continues to work on their Open Space Plan. Their BioBlitz is scheduled for May 21 from 10 am to noon. They asked to borrow nets, waders and other equipment useful for collecting specimens from the Dept. of the Environment.

Jim Mays – They are reviewing residential solar projects regarding financing and ramifications to zoning. They would like to develop guidelines. The DEP commissioner of the Ashokan Reservoir gave a talk about using herbicides near the reservoir. They will only use organic herbicides. Route 28A and a few other roads will be affected. They are trying to encourage more recycling to reduce disposal fees.

William A. More – The DEC starting to update solid waste regulations. Of special concern are illegal construction and demolition dumps. Towns are encouraged to have municipal water tested. The State of Massachusetts has announced they will test all schools water systems. The public can go to the county health department for help in interpreting results. A good practice is to run water for a while in the morning to flush out pipes. The US DEA Drug Take Back program is scheduled for April 30<sup>th</sup>. They have collected ½ million lbs. to date.

Ann Brandt – The WEC filled a slot on the commission. They are mostly working on getting a solar contract to put up an array. The town board decided to review the project again. It has not been finalized at this point. The Woodstock Land Conservancy erected a gazebo at the Comeau property with information about trails, etc.

Dave Haldeman – The environmental fair sponsored by the Interfaith Earth Action Coalition was well attended with 44 vendor booths.

Dave made a motion to adjourn. Jim seconded. Meeting adjourned unanimously at 8:35.