

EMC Meeting January 31 2018

In attendance:

David Haldeman, Shawangunk, Chair

Amanda La Valle, UC Dept. of the Environment

Eric Stewart, Marbletown

Judith Karpova, Town of Rochester

Kristin Schara, Hurley

Mary O'Donnell, Saugerties

Jim Littlefoot, New Paltz,

Mark Ellison, Esopus

William More, At Large

Sarah Underhill, Wawarsing,

John Sansalone, Gardiner,

Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm

Minutes from October and November 2017 accepted.

Judith Karpova approved as EMC Secretary

Informational report on the Glidepath natural gas project in the Town of Ulster distributed.

Speaker: Brian Montgomery, National Weather Service re: extreme weather events.

brian.montgomery@noaa.gov

Oswego, MA in meteorology, background in broadcasting, a native NYer, 20 years with NWS. (has been in Nebraska and Michigan)

Not muzzled by the current administration. climate.gov, ipcc.ch international consortium of climate change, report done every quarter. National Oceanic Services

2017 unique climatologically. "Bomb cyclogenesis" is a very old term meteorologically, this year we had events where we barometrically dropped 54 bars in 24 hours. Polar Vortex as an event; around since 1800s. It's an area of low pressure near Hudson Bay that drags down very cold air. Sometimes very cold air see-saws south while warmer air is moved north. Undulating jet stream sitting up 30, 40,000 feet in the atmosphere. Extreme weather events more common and will become more common.

New satellite launched in 2016, "GOES," which has very improved imagery of jet stream and other phenomena which cause weather; 400 trillion calculations per second now going on in weather service. US model vs European models: both competing and collaborating, weather is transnational. Also a Navy model, but not used in weather service. European model used and is currently more accurate than US model.

(located in SUNY Albany complex) NY Mesonet: microscale network so observations are on a smaller scale; now expanded throughout NY State. Grid block of 3 kilometers. The smaller the block, the more impact a bad observation has. So it's not always better to have smaller computer models. Need a broad overview as well. Goal is always to predict developments that may cause danger; floods, blizzards, tornados, etc.

Triggers in the atmosphere which are easily identified can predict there will be a flash flood, but not exactly where it will be.

Climate vs Weather. Climate is what you expect, weather is what you get.

How to make predictions that people will give credence to? Can predict a hurricane, but will people believe it and act on it? Or will they want to record it? The new challenge is that once an event is predicted, people want to see it for themselves. Or they don't believe it until they see it, and by then it's too late to get to safety. The Joplin Missouri tornado which had 180 fatalities, had 20 minutes of lead time. But people didn't leave, and many died. This is the worst possible scenario for the people of the weather service.

How to use AHPS: Advanced Hydrologic Prediction System.

Can predict creek and river level rise.

Offers a tour of the weather office!

There's a difference between getting people out of harm's way and making the news. How to keep people away from areas where weather disasters are predicted. Will it take seeing people's homes destroyed, or seeing them killed? The Weather Channel: all their data comes from the National Weather Service. Have had stormchasers killed. "Twister" made it look so fun. And now the body bags are piling up.

He is sure that future storms will be more frequent and severe. Not a case of just seeing them now when we weren't before because of new technology. We're measurably and quantitatively holding more heat in the atmosphere. We've never seen before what we're seeing now. A lot of firsts this last year: the first hurricane to hit the British Isles. (Average pressure 1,029 millibars)

Amanda La Valle: County awarded an \$84,000 grant via DEC Climate Smart Communities for resiliency, 1st part is to take state information and make it more specific to Ulster County and each town in Ulster County.

Old Business

Dave Haldeman approved as Chair for coming year

Will wait to elect Vice Chair

Dave is working on setting up a training session for SEQRA

New Business

Plastic Bags

Feb 1st, discussion in County Legislature re: plastic bags, UC Dept. of the Environment, 6th fl. of County Office Building, 5:30 pm.

Note: Fawn Tantillo ftan@co.ulster.ny.us. Tracie Bartells: traceybartells@earthlink.net are receiving comments on the issue.

NYS Recycling Conference, last November, had central discussion around this issue. A number of bills in the state legislature pending regarding this issue.

Jennie Romer: plasticbaglaws.org.

Town of Ulster Power Plant

Saugerties will have a presentation on Feb 28 at Senior Center; Rebecca Martin, re: issue of Town of Ulster proposed power plant.

Town of Marbletown thinking about putting together a letter for the EMC on the issue. Send to Town of Ulster. Send to town board of Town of Ulster, Glidepath: Procedural letter from EMC to Town of Ulster re: a positive SEQR declaration, since they're the lead agency. Lincoln Park Grid Support Center.

(Carrie Institute, connectivity of aquifers) Target corporation specifically: Here in Ulster County we are fully committed to clean and renewable energy and we oppose this plant.) Not a DEC wetland on the site they're proposing. No county reviews that Amanda LaValle knows of required – plant is small, 20 mw, below threshold of FERC review. Does need to go through SEQR. Rebecca Martin of Kingston Citizens, Margo Becker, EMC at large, Iris Bloom and Eric Stewart working on this.

Amanda LaValle: The proposed gas plant is a “peaker” plant, will kick in to meet peak demand during summer air-conditioning use spikes. Iso-zone, CH mandated to buy from it. PSC, NYSEDA, by the rules currently only have incentives only for fossil fuel generation, not solar panels with battery backup. Will produce 3 jobs. However it increases the tax base for Town of Ulster because the mall is dying. In a few years, there will be incentives but not now.

Jim Littlefoot: once this letter is drafted and approved, send a copy to every town supervisor in the county asking for a response. Every town board in the county has input; comment to the County Executive in opposition.

Mary O'Donnell: a case for this contaminating Saugerties aquifer?

Department of the Environment Report

DOE Report: the 84K grant, Climate Action Plan for County Gov't Operations, solar installation at the Mall 1.9 MW, reduce emissions 25% by 2025. 6000 panels. More LED retrofits for county jail, savings of 745K kwhs per year just from light bulbs, using NYSEDA grant money. Through the CH lighting program; CH will pick up 40% of the cost, total cost is about \$300,000. 2 year payback. Project will go from March to June.

ToR Solar Project:

A lot of opposition, both around misinformation and over resistance to clearcutting. Problem of the town getting backed into financial difficulties and needing to generate revenue. Suggestion: Is engineering information transferrable from the Ulster County landfill project which is on a closed landfill? Could save money on, for example ToR possible construction of a solar project on their own closed landfill?

Dave Haldeman noted that the Town of Shawangunk Solar Law does not permit clearcutting on any more than 10% of any parcel to be developed for a solar farm. However it does not include any protections for farmland, as does the Town of Rochester's.

Other:

NYWEA conference coming up in NYC

Saugerties: Climate Smart Communities certification going forward. Will have a speaker at their next CAC. Grants coming out in May for CSC, Saugerties wants to position itself to gain a grant.