

COUNTY OF ULSTER ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

MINUTES March 28, 2018

Clinton St. John Meeting Room SUNY Ulster

In attendance:

David Haldeman, Shawangunk, Chair

Mary O'Donnell, Saugerties

John Sansalone, Gardiner

Emilie Hauser, Kingston

Sarah Underhill, Wawarsing

William More, At large

Ken Panza, guest, Woodstock

Eric Stewart, Marbletown

Ken Crannell, Deputy County Executive of
Ulster County

Amanda LaValle, UC Dept. of the
Environment

Mark Ellison, Esopus

Judith Karpova, Town of Rochester,
Secretary

Jim Mays, Olive

Jim Littlefoot, New Paltz

Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm

Steve Petersen, Director Ulster County Emergency Service gave a presentation on the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, dated June 17, 2014:

<http://ulstercountyny.gov/emergency-services/management/plan.html>

and the 2009 Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazards Mitigation Plan:

<http://ulstercountyny.gov/emergency-services/hazard-mitigation>

Mr. Peterson presented the outline of the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan with many interesting photographs of events such as gas explosions and floods. His presentation is attached for reference. All disasters start and end locally so it is important to understand the risks and plan to mitigate the risks. Hazards are classified as High Hazard such as hazardous material in transit and at fixed sites and Moderately High such as floods.

Residents can sign up for NYALERT.gov – and receive alerts and warnings via either cell phones, land lines and email for evacuation and sheltering within. The County has the ability also to make a mass notification, whereby a cell tower can be used to send a message to all cell phones in the area even if they are not subscribed to NYALERT.gov. Fire Smart was also mentioned.

Discussion of ice jams on Wallkill River and use of hydraulic modeling and stream gauges to prepare and provide warnings.

For the Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazards Mitigation Plan, each municipality was responsible for putting together a committee and holding meetings and soliciting public comments. The inputs from the individual municipalities were then put together for the plan that was submitted to

FEMA. The updates to the 2009 Plan were completed in Fall 2017 and can be found at: <http://ulstercountyny.gov/emergency-services/hazard-mitigation>.

Towns can apply for FEMA mitigation funding for hazards which are identified in the Plan, such as an undersized culvert which causes flooding. For example, Saugerties identified culvert replacement and Olive identified flooding in Boiceville.

CACs can use the information in the All Hazards Mitigation Plan to identify opportunities for projects that can also benefit the environment, such as stream bank restoration using vegetation and culvert replacement which enhances connectivity of aquatic habitat. CACs should talk to their highway departments as they are a reliable source of information on the many hazards, especially flooding.

The County has a grant to help with implementing the Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazards Mitigation Plan.

EMC Business

Old Business

Previous Minutes

The EMC gave corrections to the Feb. 28, 2018 meeting minutes

Can the EMC carry out a valid virtual or email vote?

It is only acceptable if 100% of the members return their votes. Ulster County Legislator Tracey Bartels was consulted on this matter; her position is that an open committee cannot have virtual votes, must vote in the open meeting. Ken Crannell, Deputy County Executive of Ulster County, said he will check with the county lawyer. He thought the EMC can vote by Skype. However, for now the EMC will not vote virtually.

Can the EMC voice its view on environmental issues without first referring to the County Executive?

Dave Haldeman reported on his meeting with Tracy Bartels, County Legislator and Ken Crannell was present: The executive and legislature cannot approve or disapprove our letters on environmental issues affecting the county. All that is required is a disclaimer that the views expressed are those of the EMC only and do not represent those of any of the governing bodies of Ulster County. He clarified as follows:

- If we are advising the legislature, chief executive or the state, any letter we propose is acceptable - this is our primary role
- if we generate a letter in support of one of the Towns represented in the Council, that would also be acceptable.
- if we produce a letter to another Town not represented on the Council, especially where Home Rule issues may be foremost, our approach may need to be more informational in stating our environmental concerns.
- Each of these letters need to be sent to the county ex office and to the county legislative committee just to keep them in the loop.

Ken Crannell addressed the EMC.

He stated that he's responsible for a large portion of the government. He came to tell us we have an important role and is happy that we are giving an input on county-wide issues. He wants to make sure that the executive office and the EMC stay updated with each other. Ulster County is proud of its environmental improvements. It is campaigning for the county have pharmaceutical companies take back their unused opioids and other drugs. He discussed his credentials and experience. 46 people died of overdoses in Ulster County last year. He understands that mail-back is not the best solution but "I'm burying people, I'll take anything that helps," and we'll keep improving from there.

He noted that Senator Hanlon is involved in the budget committee; with a little communication and starting earlier things re: pharmaceutical take-back issues may have turned out better. In reference to the EMC, "We can modify our plans when we get your input." He said this is an example where not receiving input may have influenced legislative outcomes. "Communicate with us earlier, we want to hear from you." He's looking to take baby steps, and may fund a mail-back program through his office. Senior citizens may not be aware that a drug can be taken "as needed," vs. necessary to constantly take. This may be one of the factors in opioid addiction.

Regarding Glidpath, the proposed natural gas plant in the Town of Hurley, and our draft letter submitted to the County Executive: he shares our concerns regarding the negative impact on Ulster County air, and other issues cited in the letter. He advised us to reach out to the Town of Ulster Town Board vs. public condemnation of the project. He suggested contacting the county legislators who represent the Town of Ulster.

Town of Ulster Proposed Natural Gas Plant

Some of the points made in discussion:

- Put a disclaimer on anything we put out. (Find out if the same thing be applicable for local ECCs/CACs.) Ken advises temperate language. The EMC has a county-wide coordinating role. We should consider revising our initial letter to have to have a more neutral and advisory tone.
- Regarding a SEQR process – anyone can comment. There is preparation that precedes a SEQR, you have to have an involved role/agency. "Interested" agencies as well can comment, such as bordering communities whose air quality may be affected. In this case, all Ulster County towns will have air quality issues.
- The Town of Ulster gas plant is not a home rule issue here, and it's not relevant for their town government to object to comment from other town advisory groups. It's a SEQRA process and the entire county not only has a right but an obligation to weigh in.
- The town may be more open to having an advisory body. We can offer our help in forming a CAC. Or as a preliminary step, we can suggest even a Climate Smart Community prior to a CAC, there's a crack in the door now.

Pharmaceutical Take-Back

Motion to send out the pharmaceutical take-back letter approved in earlier meetings. Motion Approved. Advise the County Executive.

Discussion: This is one type of letter, dealing with state laws and policies. Another type addresses our county: when towns take a stand on an issue, and the town(s) are represented on this board, we can support them. When there's no representation from that town on our EMC, the language needs more thorough review. (Referring back to the discussion on the Town of Ulster proposed natural gas plant: In the instance of the EMC letter, since the Town of Ulster is not represented on the EMC, Margot, Erik and Dave will revise the language to be more informational in tone. We can ready it for future comment periods.)

How will whatever take-back policy that is passed be enforced? Who'll do it? Ken advised that someone who is NOT an "enforcer" with legal status approach the pharmacies, vs. someone from an enforcing county agency. He felt that Amanda LaValle, for instance, from the Department of the Environment not be involved in any enforcement whether that be plastic bags or pharmaceutical drop offs. The approach should be more in an educational / informative role.

New Business

Next Meeting Speaker(s)

County legislators: Mary Wawro, Chair and Tracey Bartels, Deputy Chair of the Energy and Environment Committee are invited to speak at the next EMC meeting on April 25th.

CVS proposed building in New Paltz

Jim Littlefoot will write a letter for the EMC to consider regarding the proposed CVS siting at North Putt Corners and Route 299 in New Paltz. CVS proposes to cut down 400 trees and install parking for 100 cars. They bought the property for 2 million. There is a building moratorium in place for another 90 days. From 4 to 6:30 pm there is very heavy traffic at that site, Saturday and Sunday, the same. If these trees are cut down, what will take up the pollution? The Thruway back-filled up the whole corner. CVS wants to drill their own well.

EMC will focus on the environmental impact. CVS calculates 15,000 sq. ft. for the store, plus the 5 Brothers hamburger parlor proposed for the site. What is the requirement per sq. ft. of building for parking, required by the Town Planning Board? Stores the same size never, ever have parking for more than 50 parking spaces, if that. The proposed CVS parking lot will create too much impermeable surface, adding to runoff and flooding. What is the impact on the "forever wild" wetland right across the street?

The store is proposed for a county road, so the county has input, which means that the EMC has input. The County Planning Board has to review it and the County Highway Dept. as well because of storm-water discharge into the county system. The project will be over the acre threshold.

Hazardous Waste

Letter on UCRRA Household Hazardous Waste Letter; discussion on William More's letter. Proposed that collection be extended from households to small businesses, municipalities and

schools (conditionally exempt small quantity generators) We will discuss next month. (Village of New Paltz now mandates only one curbside garbage pickup company.)

Reports:

DoE – Amanda LaValle announced the April 8, Nature Across Boundaries program. There is a watershed planning conference on April 12 at Norrie Point. On April 12, there is a floodplain mapping forum.

She advised us of a link to the county's auction listing. It is good to look at these delinquent parcels appropriate for public access or other good environmental uses, like charging stations. To get to it, go to the county website, choose departments, then choose the Finance department, then choose "map book." The auction is April 26th. A town can request that a parcel be pulled from the auction for public access. The DEC has first review. Some of the lands abut state lands.

Legislature meets April 5th

Roundabout deferred.

Meeting ended at 8:30 pm