

Ulster County EMC Meeting Minutes June 29, 2016

Members in Attendance:

John Sansalone, Gardiner
Kristen Schara, Hurley
Emilie Hauser, Kingston
Virginia Starke, At Large

Jim Mays, Olive
Mary O'Donnell, Saugerties
Jim Littlefoot, New Paltz

Cindy Lanzetta (Vice Chair), Marlborough
Amanda LaValle and Alanna Henneberry, UC Dept. of the Environment

Guests: Judith A. Karpova , Rochester ECC; Eric Stewart, Marbletown ECC; Sarah Underhill, Wawarsing
EC

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 pm.

Ms. Starke motioned to approve the May minutes as amended. Motion seconded by Mr. Mays. Motion carried unanimously.

Dept. of the Environment Report

Ms. LaValle provided an EMC member list and requested input from those with missing information. Municipal appointments to the EMC require a resolution from the town board and a resume to the Dept. of Environment. The towns of Marbletown, Lloyd, Rochester, Wawarsing and Woodstock do not have current EMC representatives. At-large seats require a letter from the representative's town board and a resume. The requests are forwarded to the UC Executive's office and presented to the UC Legislature. When approved, a letter is sent to the appointee along with an oath of office to be filled out and notarized.

The UC Environment.org website continues to be utilized and will be ported to the UC website and server. The website contains Creek Week and Emerald Ash Borer info. Ms. LaValle asked for suggestions on what content the EMC would like to have added. A matrix showing what towns are doing, active grants in the community and town open space plans were suggested.

Ulster County, Saugerties, New Paltz, Woodstock, Rosendale and Kingston have taken Climate Smart Community Pledges. The DEC is tying pledges to funding as an incentive to pass the pledge. The wording of the pledge can be customized and is non-binding. The Ulster County Climate Smart Committee, chaired by Manna Jo Greene, provides a forum for towns that have taken the pledge. Mr. Sansalone requested a summary that could be passed on to towns. A seminar may be scheduled if there is interest.

An event titled Sustainable Saturday is being planned for Sept 17, during National Drive Electric Week. Booths for groups promoting sustainability such as Solarize Hudson Valley, composting and community solar are examples of what would be offered. There may be electric vehicles to test drive. It may be located in the UC Office Building parking lot during the Farmer's Market. They are working with Backstage Productions to have a band provide music.

There are a number of Consolidated Funding Grants available. Applications are due by the end of July. These grants provide funding for projects such as economic development, Climate Smart Communities, water quality improvements and state park enhancements. Search for New York State CFA to find information. Hudson Valley Greenway is offering grants for trail work for the second half of the year.

Ms. LaValle provided brochures regarding new fish advisories from the NYSDEC. Additional copies are available. There are also brochures available from NYS Association of Metropolitan Planning Organization on laws regarding bicycle and pedestrian rules (Complete Streets Initiative). It was suggested that the EMC sponsor a presentation by an UC Planning Dept. on the plans for non-motorized transportation. Education credits to planning board members could be offered for attendance.

UC County Planning Board Update

A new draft of building codes for solar installations has been sent to town planning boards. The codes are meant to be used as boiler plate and can be tailored to town specifications. Towns are asked to provide comments to UC Planning Board through their planning boards. There is grant money to encourage adoption. A webinar is available that covers solar industry issues for planning boards. CACs are encouraged to watch the seminar with their planning boards. Solar installations, especially large scale projects, are expected to have implications to open space planning. CAC's can help planning board members to understand the issues. Ms. Henneberry will send out a link to the webinar by Pace University. UC has information on their GIS that could be helpful to CAC's doing open space plans and natural resource inventories.

Old Business

Ms. Henneberry asked EMC members to send submissions of events to the UC Dept. of Environment for Creek Week events. The forms have been emailed to EMC members. The goal is to have events related to water and the watershed for the public. Past events included fishing, kayaking, nature walks, art shows, etc. There is a link in the Hudson Valley Ramble newsletter referring to the EMC Creek Week page

New Business

Ms. Lanzetta made a motion to cancel the July EMC meeting. Ms. O'Donnell seconded. The discussion however raised the issue that the August meeting will be too late to plan Creek Week and other fall events. The motion was retracted. The EMC may consider skipping August due to vacation schedules.

Member Roundabout

John Sansalone – There will be a meeting with the planning board and the ECC to address a project covered by an overlay district which should have initially been referred to the ECC. They ECC is working on comments. There was a joint meeting of the New York and New England Water Environment Association chapters. Some of the papers presented may be available online at their website. There is a NYWEA committee on working on a law regarding lead testing in schools. A digest of water quality/infrastructure articles could be circulated to EMC members.

Kristen Schara – Local members of CACs and planning boards and environmental groups were invited to the Farm Hub in Hurley for a walking tour. The focus was on birds and butterflies that are present on the farm. Two members of the CAC signed up to volunteer for the BlockBuster Survey of invasive species in eastern UC which is part of the Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (LHPRISM). It is sponsored by NYSDEC and coordinated by the New York New Jersey Trail Conference.

Jim Mays –The CAC continues to work on a recycling awareness event, similar to events in Marbletown. They hope to do it in early autumn. They are also working on solar electric awareness, with general meetings and interviews with installers, for the purpose of information gathering. The town is looking at the possibility or necessity of regulations for solar electric installations, perhaps based on the state model. The town is moving toward joining the state Climate Smart Communities resolution. A draft resolution has been circulated for comment. The CAC has reviewed the program for the town. It will be voted on at July meeting. They are working on a similar event to Trash Fest. A local restaurant has an exhibit of art from recycled materials by high school students. Jim also went to the LHPRISM survey meeting but Olive is not included in the survey area. (Hurley and Olive are included in the Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership, CRISP, which is coordinated by The Catskill Center. The entire state is sectioned into PRISMS. There is a listserv to get information on the programs to locate invasives.)

Emilie Hauser – Hudson River Estuary grants are due June 30. Kingston CAC continues to work on their NRI. They are getting maps ready and looking for a consultant to write the narrative. They are looking at wood burning stoves

Sarah Underhill - They have a completed natural resource inventory together with Rochester. They are now working together on an open space plan.

Eric Stewart - The ECC has reorganized. They just completed a street light survey so that they can convert to LEDS. They found they were paying for broken or private owned lights in some cases. They sponsored a Trash Fest which included many events such as art installations, dance, music, and movies, all with the goal to encourage the public to reduce, reuse and recycle. The ECC is working on a way to cut down on plastic and paper shopping bags. They are exploring bag fees or a ban. A deposit was suggested. A pollinator garden at the new town hall with herbs and native plants was installed. They have an open space plan and a bond passed to purchase open space. Part of the town has been surveyed for biodiversity by Hudsonia and they are working with them to survey the remainder.

Jim Littlefoot – The Wallkill Correctional Facility changed from a Medium B to Max A facility. They are planning to cut down all the trees on the grounds (72 acres) and put in another fence. Jim has been appointed to the Village of New Paltz Environmental Conservation Committee. A Boy Scout prepared a flood preparedness survival and recovery guide for the Town of New Paltz for an Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Sansalone made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Starke seconded. Meeting adjourned unanimously at 8:12.