

ULSTER COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Dave Haldeman, Chair
Margot Becker, Vice-Chair
Kenneth Panza, Secretary

Minutes for the EMC Meeting of February 26, 2020

A quorum present, the regular meeting of the Ulster County Environmental Council was convened at 6:40 PM in the Howard C. St. John Business Seminar Room, George Clinton Hall, on the campus of SUNY Ulster in Stone Ridge, NY, by David Haldeman, Chair.

Municipal Members Present

Mark Ellison, Town of Esopus
Dave Haldeman, Town of Shawangunk
Emilie Hauser, City of Kingston
Jim Littlefoot, Town of New Paltz
Jim Mays, Town of Olive
Mary O'Donnell, Town of Saugerties
Kristen Schara, Town of Hurley
Eric Stewart, Town of Marbletown
Sarah Underhill, Town of Wawarsing

At Large Members Present

Margot Becker
William More
Kenneth Panza

Department of the Environment

Amanda LaValle, Coordinator

Guests

Zura & Victor Capelli, 850 Route 28 Project

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of **January 29, 2020** meeting of the EMC were presented, discussed, and approved by unanimous consent.

- Misspelled name identified

Report from Department of the Environment

Amanda LaValle, Coordinator

Introduction of Europa McGovern

Amanda LaValle informed the EMC that Europa McGovern has joined the Ulster County Department of the Environment. Europa previously was the Clean Energy Coordinator at the Hudson Valley Regional Council. In that role, Europa worked with many Ulster County towns supporting their climate smart objectives.

Ulster County Ban on Pesticides

Ulster County bans the use of pesticides on county owned property, unless an exemption is obtained. The railbed and track used by the Catskill Mountain Railroad is on property leased from the county and is subject to the pesticide ban. The Catskill Mountain Railroad has applied for an exemption.

Complicating the question of an exemption is that the Catskill Mountain Railroad runs adjacent to property owned by the Hudson Valley Farm Hub, which is seeking organic certification. It's unclear how the application of pesticides on the railbed would affect the Farm Hub's application for organic certification.

Bring Your Own Bag State Law

Beginning March 1, 2020, a new bag waste reduction law will take effect in New York State, which will supersede Ulster County's plastic bag law.

Skip the Straw Law

Material promoting the Skip the Straw Law for reducing the use of single-use plastics – beverage straws, cutlery, stirrers, and condiment packets – has been prepared. Interns working for the Department of the Environment are distributing the material to businesses, restaurants, etc.

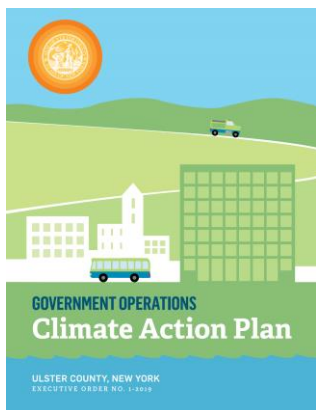
Other Items

A watershed conference is being organized by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County.

Hosting a Climate Smart Roundtable based on the format developed by Dutchess County is being considered.

Ulster County Climate Action Plan

Amanda LaValle, Coordinator



Climate action plans are comprehensive roadmaps that outline specific activities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The plans build upon greenhouse gas inventories and focus on those activities that can achieve the greatest emission reductions in the most cost effective manner. Ulster County government has made substantial achievements in environmental sustainability and climate action, including a net carbon neutral county government operation.

The Climate Action Plan sets a clear path for meeting the directives of the County Executive and County Legislature to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with governmental operations by 25% by 2025, purchasing 100% renewable energy, and operating as a carbon neutral government. The Climate Action Plan focuses solely on reducing GHG

emissions attributed to Ulster County government operations by reducing energy consumption, increasing renewable energy generation, and offsetting the impacts of the remaining fossil fuel combustion.

Plan Framework

This plan consists of four main components (Figure 2) that form a comprehensive summary of past actions, the strategy for moving forward, as well as a list of projects which will directly lead to a quantifiable reduction in GHG emissions.

The first component is the Environmental Leadership & Ulster County Sustainability Guide which documents our progress and achievements.

The second component is the Ulster County Carbon Neutral Operations Strategy. This strategy serves as a framework for decision making as well as a guide for net carbon neutral operations. It is based in the principles of building science and engineering yet provides an approachable, understandable and consistent way to approach climate action measures.

The third component is the Greenhouse Gas Inventory. It is essential that any plan or action includes a comprehensive analysis of energy use by the County's operations. The County produces annual reports on both building and fleet vehicle energy use.

The fourth and final component is a detailed list of potential projects that reduce energy use and increase the use of renewable energy. This section, the Implementation Roadmap, focuses on the major sectors of energy use within County government operations. The Carbon Neutral Operations Strategy is applied as the framework for identifying and prioritizing action.

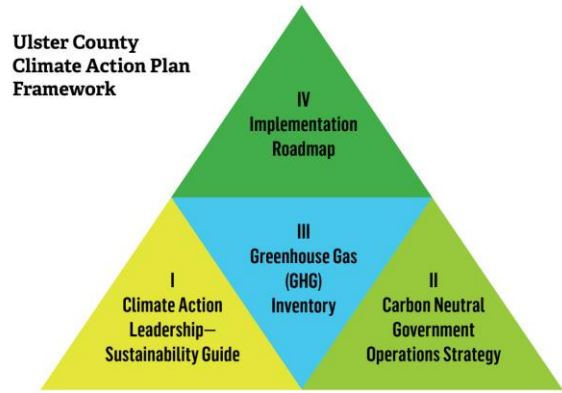


Figure 2.

Old Business

850 Route 28 LLC Project / Letter Requesting Positive Declaration

A letter to the Town of Kingston Planning Board requesting a Positive Declaration under SEQR for the 850 Route 28 LLC Project was considered by the EMC was proposed.

A motion was made by Mary O'Donnell, Town of Saugerties, to send the letter with some minor modifications. The motion was seconded by Jim Mays, Town of Olive. The motion carried by unanimous consent.

Danskammer Energy Center

During the stipulation process, EMC raised the issue about sea level rise and its impact on the Danskammer site. Danskammer would not commit to a detailed evaluation, but instead made a generic statement that they would follow the law. That was the status on December 11, 2019 when the stipulations were submitted to the Article 10 Siting Board.

On February 10, 2020, the Siting Board returned Danskammer's application citing deficiencies in the application, including a failure to provide a comprehensive review of the state Coastal Policies.

Council Member Roundabout

Dave Haldeman, Town of Shawangunk

Town of Shawangunk is evaluating the possible use of micro-hydro.

Jim Littlefoot, Town of New Paltz

At the last meeting, Jim talked about the importance of clean water. This meeting, Jim reported on his first-hand experience in New Paltz. New Paltz was shut down because of contaminated water supply.

The Wallkill is highly polluted. If you follow the Wallkill, it comes out from New Jersey clean, but picks up pollution when flowing through New York.

Mary O'Donnell, Town of Saugerties

Presentation about EV charging stations at Saugerties Library.

Presentation about heat pumps at the senior center with Melissa Everett of Sustainable Hudson Valley.

Considering a CCA.

Saugerties School Superintendent will present at the next meeting of the CSC Task Force.

Solar array on the Saugerties landfill is complete.

About finished with LED street light conversion.

Emilie Hauser, City of Kingston

The Kingston Common Council will consider the effects of the city's Open Space Plan when deciding whether to make it a part of the Kingston 2025 Comprehensive Plan. The council unanimously adopted a resolution naming itself the lead agency in the environmental review of the Open Space Plan.

Meeting held to consider improving use of the Esopus Creek canoeing and kayaking by removing trees and other woody debris.

Eric Stewart, Town of Marbletown

Continued work on Marbletown's 100% renewables action plan with Melissa Everett of Sustainable Hudson Valley

Working to revitalize the Rondout Watershed Alliance.

Continued water quality testing and monitoring.

Sponsoring two Trees for Tribs projects.

Rondout Repair Café, February 29.

Mark Ellison, Town of Esopus

Composting Workshop to be held with Laura Petit.

Sponsor "Just Eat It" film on Food Waste Management.

Seedlings will be distributed on Earth Day.

Ken Panza, Woodstock

Woodstock NY Pollinator Pathway, a community-wide project creating a “Pollinator Pathway” with much-needed habitat not only for pollinators, but for birds and many other forms of wildlife.

Sponsored by Woodstock Land Conservancy, Woodstock Transition, and The Catskill Center.

Natural Resources Inventory. Received the first draft of land use maps to review. Partnering with Olive and the Hudson River Estuary Program to complete a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI).

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm by unanimous consent.

Respectively submitted,



Kenneth S. Panza, Secretary