

# ULSTER COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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

## Minutes for the EMC Meeting of May 27, 2020

A quorum present, the regular meeting of the Ulster County Environmental Council was convened via Zoom video conferencing at 6:35 PM by David Haldeman, Chair. Meetings of the EMC are open to the public, but Zoom invitations will be sent only to members of the EMC. If others wish to attend, please notify the secretary or the chair to obtain Zoom login instructions and passwords.

### Municipal Members Present

Mark Ellison, Town of Esopus  
Dave Haldeman, Town of Shawangunk  
Emilie Hauser, City of Kingston  
Jim Mays, Town of Olive  
Mary O'Donnell, Town of Saugerties  
Kristen Schara, Town of Hurley

### At Large Members Present

Margot Becker  
Kenneth Panza

### Department of the Environment

Amanda LaValle, Coordinator  
Ben Ganon, Resource Technician

## Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the **February 26, 2020** and **April 29, 2020** meetings of the EMC were considered and approved by unanimous consent.

## New Business

There being no formal agenda, the chair led a discussion about how the EMC should operate in the Zoom environment and what subjects should be considered. The following is a sampling of the topics discussed.

### Speakers

There is a consensus that speakers should to be invited to address the EMC. Several EMC members reported participating in successful Zoom conferences with speakers, slides, and Q & A.

### Community Choice Aggregation (CCA)

Mary O'Donnell discussed Saugerties' evaluation of CCA, and suggested that EMC should become more informed about CCA.

### Community Distributed Generation (CDG)

Dave Haldeman reported that the Town of Shawangunk has been approached by a CDG vendor offering a 10% discount on electricity. Amanda LaValle reported that the Department of the Environment is considering a RFP template for CDG proposals that could be used by the towns.

These two items, Community Choice Aggregation and Community Distributed Generation, are a focus of the Ulster County Climate Smart Committee (CSC), which held a CCA workshop in

October and has established a CCA subcommittee. It may be difficult to pursue these subjects without duplication.

### Parks & Trails Overuse

The increase usage of parks and trails is raising questions of overuse and carrying capacity. This is not a new issue. Overuse of parks and trails in the Catskills has been a serious problem for the past few years, but the pandemic has increased their use.

### Pollinator Pathways

A pollinator pathway is a network of pollinator friendly areas spaced closely enough to create a wildlife corridor that provides habitat and nutrition for pollinators. Pollinators are birds, bees, butterflies, and other insects as well as amphibians, bats, and other small mammals.

### Composting & Waste Management

The expected closure of Seneca Meadows made trash and waste management Ulster County's highest environmental priority, and the pandemic made the problem worse. Food distribution now uses unimaginable amounts of plastic containers and recycling has been constrained.

### Local Food Sources, Meat Consumption

Project Resilience, the Ulster County sponsored effort to provide meals for those that need them, highlighted the important of local food sources. During the pandemic, national food supply chains faltered, but local farmers were able to respond quickly to the need. The pandemic also illustrated the problem with a diet heavily dependent on meat. Reducing meat consumption has long been recognized as an important component of addressing climate change.

## Report from Department of the Environment

Amanda LaValle, Coordinator

### Project Resilience

Last month, Amanda reported the department was responsible for coordinating Ulster County's Project Resilience, a community fund and local food distribution effort to support residents impacted by COVID-19. The County secured over \$2 million in funding and is utilizing UCAT as well as partnering with municipalities and non-profits to deliver meals via local distribution centers. This was a huge effort. Meals were provided to over 8,000 people, 4% of Ulster County's population.

Phase 2 of Project Resilience shifted the focus of the program from one that provides premade meals to one that provides residents with a weekly supply of groceries.

### Plastic Bag Ban

The New York State plastic bag ban abrogates the Ulster County plastic bag law, and the state postponed enforcement of its law. Plastic bags once again rule the supermarkets.

## Ulster County Department of the Environment Summary of 2020 Stormwater Annual Report

Amanda LaValle, Coordinator; Ben Ganon, Resource Technician

Under the federal regulations commonly known as Stormwater Phase II, Ulster County is regulated as a traditional, non-land use control Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). The Departments of the Environment, Public Works, Information Services, and Planning worked together to achieve this year's stormwater program objectives. Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation (UCSWCD), Ulster County Cornell Cooperative Extension-Ulster County (CCE-UC), Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (UCRRA), and Ulster County Environmental Management Council (EMC) significantly contributed to meeting the County's stormwater goals particularly in the areas of Public Education and Outreach (MCM1) and Public Involvement/Participation (MCM2).

This presentation fulfills the requirement for a public review of Ulster County's stormwater plan.

## Legislature Report – Energy & Environment Committee

Dave Haldeman, Chair, has been unable to penetrate security and attend the meetings of the Ulster County Energy & Environment Committee.

## Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm by unanimous consent.

Respectively submitted,



Kenneth S. Panza, Secretary

### **Attachments:**

Summary, Ulster County 2020 Storm Water Management Plan