

ULSTER COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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

Minutes for the EMC Meeting of June 24, 2020

A quorum present, the regular meeting of the Ulster County Environmental Council was convened by Zoom video conferencing at 6:30 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
Eric Stewart, Town of Marbletown

At Large Members Present

Margot Becker
Kenneth Panza

Department of the Environment

Amanda LaValle, Coordinator

Guests

Sean Degue, Citizens Climate Lobby
Rachelle Gura, Citizens Climate Lobby
Remy Naumann, Citizens Climate Lobby
Elizabeth Strum, Citizens Climate Lobby
Zura and Victor Capelli, Kingston

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of **May 27, 2020** meeting of the EMC were presented, discussed, and approved by unanimous consent.

Speaker/Presentation

Sean Degue, Citizens Climate Lobby

The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act

Carbon Fee: This policy puts a fee on fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas. It starts low, and grows over time. It will drive down carbon pollution because energy companies, industries, and consumers will move toward cleaner, cheaper options.

Carbon Dividend: The money collected from the carbon fee is allocated in equal shares every month to the American people to spend as they see fit. Program costs are paid from the fees collected. The government does not keep any of the money from the carbon fee.

Border Carbon Adjustment: To protect U.S. manufacturers and jobs, imported goods will be assessed a border carbon adjustment, and goods exported from the United States will receive a refund under this policy.

Regulatory Adjustment: This policy preserves effective current regulations, like auto mileage standards, but pauses the EPA authority to regulate the CO2 and equivalent emissions covered by the fee, for the first 10 years after the policy is enacted. If emission targets are not being met after 10 years, Congress gives clear direction to the EPA to regulate those emissions to meet those targets. The pause does not impact EPA regulations related to water quality, air quality, health or other issues. This policy's price on pollution will lower carbon emissions far more than existing and pending EPA regulations.

Report from Department of the Environment

Amanda LaValle, Coordinator

Project Resilience

Project Resilience Phase II is helping 500 to 600 families obtain groceries through food pantries and other local sources. The County is helping to connect and coordinate food sources with eligible families.

Phase I of Project Resilience delivered 250,485 meals. There were about 1,000, large and small financial donors and hundreds of volunteers involved in the efforts.

Culvert Assessment

Ulster County Department of the Environment, in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County, will inventory and assess culverts within the Lower Esopus Watershed in order to develop town-wide, municipal road-stream crossing management plans for the towns of Woodstock, Kingston, and Saugerties. The management plans will allow municipalities to identify priority culvert replacement projects that improve flood resiliency and road infrastructure condition and are barriers to fish and wildlife passage. The project also will produce conceptual designs for three county crossings and shovel-ready designs for up to two additional crossings.

Recreational Access to the Lower Esopus

Surveyed the Lower Esopus to identify obstacles to recreational access and usage. Improved public access areas and removing accumulated logs, tree jams, and other debris would enhance the Lower Esopus for kayaking and canoeing. Establishing a working group for public access.

Eric Stewart, Marbletown, reported that the Marbletown-Tongore Park swimming beach on the Esopus has been closed because of high bacteria counts. Mary O'Donnell, Saugerties, reports that the Lower Esopus in Saugerties is restricted because of extensive water chestnut and Eurasian milfoil infestations.

County Composting Law

The implementation of the first phase of the County's Composting Law, which requires composting by entities generating more than two tons of organic waste a week, has been postponed to the first of the year.

County RFP for Distributed Community Solar

The Department of the Environment has issued an RFP for distributed community solar. The RFP will document the actual contract terms and conditions available from community solar providers. This RFP can be used as a template for towns wishing to investigate community solar offerings.

Old Business

850 Route 28 LLC Site Plan / Special Use Permit Application

On June 15, 2020 the Town of Kingston Planning Board held its first meeting (virtually) since January. This meeting resumed the review of applicant's response to a number of identified impacts. The applicant committed to responding to all comments made by the Planning Board; and by others. WLC's and Catskill Mountainkeeper joint lawyer submitted several studies containing new information, which would have been explored had the PB required an EIS. We continue to ask them to issue a Positive Declaration so that a full project EIS can be completed. The size of this project, its proposed manufacturing processes, and its adjacency to a highly-used 3,000 acre NYS Wild Forest necessitates this.

Summary notes from the June 15 Town of Kingston virtual Planning Board meeting were distributed to EMC on UlsterEMC.

Danskammer Energy Center – Dueling Webinars

Cycle of Harm: The Toxic Path of Fracked Gas. (Part 1: Extraction)

Monday, June 22nd webinar, 6-8pm

Scenic Hudson, along with the Stop Danskammer Coalition, Food & Water Watch, Sierra Club, Clearwater, UACT, Newburgh Clean Water Project, Orange County RAPP, Catskill Mountainkeeper, NYPIRG and New Paltz Climate Action Coalition, invites you to a new webinar series that exposes each detrimental stage of fracking, from drilling well to pipeline to power plant and beyond. The webinars focus on the toxic journey of fracked gas from Pennsylvania well fields to the proposed new Danskammer plant in the Town of Newburgh.

[A point of information – Danskammer is attached to the Iroquois pipeline, which sources natural gas from Canada. Generally, natural gas from Canada is not considered [horizontally] fracked gas.]

Danskammer Modernization Project Webinar, June 24, 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM

Join the conversation and hear from union members, elected officials and energy experts about what the proposed Danskammer project means for the Hudson Valley! The proposed Danskammer modernization project is important for our entire Hudson Valley community. On Wednesday, June 24 at 5:30 p.m., the Hudson Valley Building & Construction Trades Council will host a webinar about the benefits of the Danskammer project and its impact on the future of our region and our workforce. The Danskammer modernization project will support more than 450 good-paying union jobs right in our own backyard while contributing more than \$50 million to our local governments and schools over the next 20 years. During the webinar, you'll hear from union members, elected officials and energy experts about what this project means for the Hudson Valley.

Danskammer Energy Center – Article 10 Application

- Initial Article 10 Application to the siting board submitted December 11, 2019
- First Supplement to the Article 10 Application filed March 11, 2020 in response to a notice of deficiencies from the siting board.
- Second Supplement to the Article 10 Application filed April 21, 2020 responding to issues raised by the Department of Public Service and DEC concerning future climate risk and the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).
- Third Supplement to the Article 10 Application due to be filed during the first week of July responding to questions about the project’s consistency with the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

The Danskammer Article 10 Application has not been accepted by the Siting Board as complete.

New Business

Solid Waste Management – Emilie Hauser, Kingston

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation recently approved the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (UCRRA) 10-year Solid Waste Management Plan. The 10-year plan will move to the Legislature for review and approval. It’s expected that the Zero Waste Plan will be reactivated as part of those discussions. Four options were discussed in the Solid Waste Management Plan:

1. In County landfill
2. Rail transport out of County
3. Biomass conversion
4. Improved Recycling

Council Member Roundabout

Saugerties, Mary O’Donnell

Investigating CCA. Received presentations from Joule and Good Energy.

Using a harvester to remove extensive water chestnut and Eurasian milfoil infestations.

Completed conversion to 100% LED streetlights.

Considering Climate Reality’s 100% Commitment pledge to renewable energy.

Marbletown, Eric Stewart

Completed study on achieving 100% renewable.

Obtained Bronze Level CSC certification

Three solar projects approved.

Continued engagement with Rondout Creek Watershed Alliance.

Kingston, Emilie Hauser

Completed Open Space Plan

Working with Bard College on a study of wood smoke pollution in Kingston.

Joined the Ulster County Water Quality Committee.

Esopus, Mark Ellison

Held first meeting of the Esopus Environmental Board since Covid-19 shut-down.

Sapling give-away went well.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:39 pm by unanimous consent.

Next Meeting

July 29, 2020, 6:30 pm via Zoom conferencing

Respectively submitted,



Kenneth S. Panza, Secretary