

ULSTER COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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

Minutes for the EMC Meeting of July 29, 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 are 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
Sarah Underhill, Town of Wawarsing

At Large Members Present

Margot Becker
William More
Kenneth Panza
Virginia Starke

Department of the Environment

Amanda LaValle, Coordinator

Guests

Tom Konrad, Chair, Marbletown Environmental Conservation Commission

Madeline Russo, Town of Rochester

Melissa Everett, Executive Director, Sustainable Hudson Valley

Dave Conover, Outreach and Communications Coordinator, Sustainable Hudson Valley

Stephanie Ingraldi, Summer Intern, Sustainable Hudson Valley

Ben Eckstein, Summer Intern, Sustainable Hudson Valley

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of **June 24, 2020** meeting of the EMC were presented, discussed, and approved by unanimous consent.

Speaker/Presentation

Tom Konrad, Chair, Marbletown Environmental Conservation Commission (ECC)

Marbletown is widely recognized as a leader in the transition to 100% Renewables. The Marbletown ECC developed a strategy for obtaining 100% of the community's energy from renewable sources, including solar power and Central Hudson's High Falls hydroelectric plant. Partnering with Sustainable Hudson Valley, the ECC estimated community-wide energy use and considered how to reduce overall energy needs through efficiency and the use electricity for heat and transportation.

Marbletown achieved Bronze Status in New York's Climate Smart Communities Program, completed 8 of the 10 NYSEDA High Impact Action Items, and is the first Ulster County town to implement Community Choice Aggregation (CCA).

The plan calls for electrifying buildings and vehicles with 100% renewable electricity. Local renewable resources include the 3.1 MW High Falls electric plant owned by Central Hudson, rooftop and community PV solar. About 12 MW of additional PV solar is needed beyond hydro. A ten point program has been developed that simplifies the steps for reaching 100% renewable.

Following Tom's presentation, **Melissa Everett**, Executive Director, Sustainable Hudson Valley, explained its programs for individual and businesses to implement renewable energy resources.

A copy of the Marbletown 100% Renewable presentation is provided as an attachment to these minutes.

Report from Department of the Environment

Amanda LaValle, Coordinator

Culvert Assessment

There was a kick-off meeting of the Lower Esopus culvert assessment project. The 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 will improve flood resiliency, road infrastructure condition, and remove barriers to fish and wildlife passage. The project will produce conceptual designs for three county crossings and shovel-ready designs for up to two additional crossings.

The meeting was attended by Mary O'Donnell, Saugerties, and Ken Panza, Woodstock.

Consultant

The Department of the Environment is considering a consultant to review the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for discharges from the Ashokan into the Lower Esopus.

Community Solar RFP

The county is completing its review of the responses to an RFP for community solar. The intention is that municipalities can also take advantage of these proposals.

Old Business

Carbon Tax

The Citizens Climate Lobby presented its proposal for a carbon tax at the June EMC meeting, with an understanding that the EMC would consider the proposal at its July meeting.

Mary O'Donnell, Town of Saugerties, reported the Saugerties Environmental Management Council (EMC) considered the Citizens Climate Lobby carbon tax and decided not to recommend its endorsement to the Saugerties Town Board. The carbon tax proposal is too complicated for the EMC

and Town Board to make an informed decision, and consideration of Federal Law is beyond the board's immediate interest.

Kenneth Panza, at large member, informed the EMC that there two other carbon tax proposals that should be considered before making any recommendations. NY Renews, a collaborative of over 200 environmental and economic justice organizations that was the driving force behind CLCPA, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, is proposing legislation that would "levy a gradually increasing fee on pollution that warms our climate and makes people sick. Then collect all that revenue and invest it." NY Renews announced a webinar for August 5, which may formally introduce this legislation to the public.

NYISO introduced a proposal for carbon pricing. NYISO controls the generation and distribution of electricity in New York, and they have proposed to incorporate the Social Cost of Carbon into wholesale energy markets using a price for carbon dioxide emissions that is charged to emitting resources.

Considering these various proposals, it's premature for EMC to make a decision or recommendation about carbon taxes or pricing. Instead, the EMC decided to remain aware and to follow the carbon tax initiatives to increase our understanding.

Meeting Announcements and Process

Continued discussion from the last EMC meeting about the process and distribution of meeting announcements. No consensus was reached.

Update, Tree Cutting Along the Wallkill

A discussion by Dave Haldeman, EMC Chair, about the restrictions on streamside development and disturbances. This discussion was triggered by substantial tree removal along the Wallkill in the Town of Shawangunk.

Council Member Roundabout

Woodstock, Kenneth Panza

Woodstock Town Board closed access to the town swimming holes along the Sawkill creek because of crowding and excess trash and litter.

Woodstock contracted with Central Hudson to replace all remaining municipal street lights with LED fixtures.

Signs have been posted at the entrance and in the center of Woodstock reminding visitors to wear masks and keep social distance.

Saugerties, Mary O'Donnell

Considering CCA. Received presentations from Joule and Good Energy, and recommended Joule to the Town Board as program administrator.

Tim Guinee presented Climate Reality's 100% Commitment pledge for renewable energy.

Town of Hurley, Kristen Schara

Methane escaping from the Hurley closed landfill is seeping into the town offices.

Esopus, Mark Ellison

Esopus is considering a proposal for a 2 MW solar array from BQ Energy. This array would be in addition to an existing 600 KW array that was also installed by BQ Energy. The main obstacles are interconnection problems with Central Hudson.

The Esopus Environmental Board is considering becoming a Conservation Board, a more formal designation under town law.

Kingston, Emilie Hauser

Completed the Open Space Plan, which has been incorporated into Kingston's Comprehensive Plan. This revised plan will be presented to the Common Council for approval.

The Common Council considered endorsing the Green Amendment to New York's Constitution.

Town of Wawarsing, Sarah Underhill

Restarted taking water samples.

Presented the Climate Smart Communities program to the Town Board.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm by unanimous consent.

Next Meeting

August 26, 2020, 6:30 pm via Zoom conferencing

Respectively submitted,



Kenneth S. Panza, Secretary

Attachment:

Marbletown: The Path to 100% Renewable Energy