

**Minutes for the
EMC Meeting of April 28, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Ulster County Environmental Council was convened by Zoom video conferencing at 6:38 p.m. by Emilie Hauser, Vice Chair. Meetings of the EMC are open to the public, and if others wish to attend, please notify the secretary or the chair to obtain Zoom login instructions and passwords.

Time was spent determining if there was a quorum, consisting of a majority of the then designated Council membership, which stands at 13.

To achieve a quorum, emails and phone calls were made to absent members.

Municipal Members Present

Emilie Hauser, City of Kingston
Kristen Schara, Town of Hurley, joined
6:44 pm
Mary O'Donnell, Town of Saugerties
Simon Strauss, Town of Olive (joined
around 7 pm)
Eric Stewart, Town of Marbletown

At Large Members Present

Margot Becker
Virginia Starke – joined around 7 pm

Department of the Environment
Nick Hvozda, Deputy Coordinator
Members whose appointments are pending
Present.

Neil Rindlaub – Gardiner
Roberta Clement – Gardiner
Mark Ellison, Esopus

Members present shared their phone numbers and Nick Hvozda will update and share the list of contact information as an action item.

Action Item: When agenda and Zoom link for meetings are sent out, members should indicate whether they are attending.

Simon Strauss and Virginia Stark completed the quorum.

It was moved by Eric Stewart and seconded by Mark Ellison that the approval of the minutes for March 31st meeting would be postponed until the June meeting.

Announcements – none

Department of the Environment – Nick Hvozda

County Executive Patrick Ryan launched a county Green New Deal initiative, with projects that will be carried out by various departments. See <https://gnd.ulstercountyny.gov>

The Green New Deal Plan lists all the action items for short, medium, and long-term.

One initiative is Solarize for community solar with a county wide scope.

<https://gnd.ulstercountyny.gov/solarize-ulster/>

County has vetted and selected three vendors: Common Energy, Power Market and Solstice. Solar providers will donate \$100 to Solarize Ulster and subscribers also receive \$100. Municipalities can be part of the Solar Ulster and have their own campaign. DOE has put together a factsheet about the solarize campaign and how towns can participate and sent a notice to Town Supervisors. Members present asked that they receive the information.

If a municipality gets ten subscribers, they can qualify for \$5000 from NYSERDA, for the municipalities that are under 39,999 population required number of campaigns is 10 and the number of awards is 100 municipalities in the State.

Community solar is a high impact action for Clean Energy Communities. The DOE has confirmed that NYSERDA will accept county and town dual actions for CEC credit.

Action items: Nick to send out information to members.

Saugerties is using East Light Power Market and Common Energy. Solstice Energy's array is on Route 32 near Bloomington. All three providers are offering up to 10% discount off regular bill.

A household is not eligible for community solar if already have solar on roof.

Europa McGovern at DOE will be assisting municipalities on community solar.

Discussion about whether there will be single billing for consumers who are using community solar. This may not happen initially, but the option is desirable for the providers and it is important to have a simple process for the consumer.

There is a Member of Ulster County Climate Smart Task Force who is interested in organizing tree plantings for Arbor Day in 2022. If a municipality is interested, let Nick know.

Old Business

Ashokan Reservoir Water Releases into Lower Esopus Creek

Saugerties, Marbletown, Hurley and Kingston plan on submitting resolutions to DEC about the releases by June deadline.

Discussion of EMC draft resolution. Three edits were discussed and agreed upon.

- Change not exceptionally turbid to excessively turbid.
- Use essential instead of important in *important contributor to the social, economic and environmental quality along the stream's corridor*.
- Revise last sentence to say: *The DEIS must present a long-term plan to reduce the discharge of high quantities of turbid water and specifically account for climate change impacts.*

Mary moved and Eric seconded a motion that the resolution be accepted with above edits. 6 yeas with Simon abstaining.

Action Item: Emilie will send edited resolution to Dave Haldeman. Resolution should be sent to DEC and copies to State Representatives in Assembly and Senate. Deadline is 5 p.m. June 16.

There was discussion of whether there is a need for EMC members who represents municipalities to vet issues with town boards or town supervisor.

Ashokan Pumped Storage Proposal

On April 12, 2021, Victor M. Rojas, Managing Director at Premium Energy Holdings, LLC, filed with FERC, “Request of Withdrawal for the Ashokan Pumped Storage Project, FERC Project No. P-15056-000.”

Dear Secretary Bose:

Premium Energy Holdings, LLC (“Premium Energy”) requests to withdraw the preliminary permit application for the Ashokan Pumped Storage Project (P-15056-000).

Our request is mainly due to the social impact the proposed project reservoirs would cause. Once a more suitable project location is identified, Premium Energy may file a new application for a PSH project.

Premium Energy may pursue pumped storage at Neversink or Rondout reservoirs.

Understanding the Difference between a Council and a Board

Julie Noble of City of Kingston and a member of the Board of Directors of New York State Association of Conservation Commissions, is willing to help find speakers to address moving from a Commission to a Board for CACs: New York State General Municipal Law Article 12-F, Section 239-x and Section 239-y.

CACs should investigate how they were formed, by legislative or executive action. Look into town records for local law or resolution, which would detail responsibilities, number of members, etc.

Completing an NRI, Open Space Plan and an Open Space Index are steps in going from a Council to a Board. Gardiner is working on their Index.

Town Laws Requiring Septic Tank Inspection

Sebastian Pillitteri of City of Kingston CAC would be willing to speak to the EMC on requiring septic tank inspection when a house is sold.

Danskammer Update

Transcripts of the public statement hearings held on March 31, 2021 are available on the DPS website under case 18-F-0325.

The procedural conference held on April 1, 2021 directed any party intending to file a written issue statement to do so by April 23, 2021. To the extent any party intends to file a motion requesting that the Siting Board dismiss the application based on non-compliance with CLCPA, such motion must be filed by May 6, 2021, with replies due May 14. Given the 12-month statutory timeframe for a final Siting Board decision, we are not able to delay the litigation schedule to accommodate motions. [by Sierra Club/Orange RAPP, Riverkeeper]

Based on the discussion at the procedural conference and other practical and legal considerations, including the timeframes imposed by Public Service Law, the following litigation schedule is adopted.

DATE	MILESTONE
April 23, 2021	Parties' Issue Statements
June 25, 2021	Pre-filed Testimony and Exhibits
July 23, 2021	Rebuttal Testimony and Exhibits
August 6, 2021	1. Exhibit Lists (each party that sponsored pre-filed exhibits); 2. Consensus witness schedule, with estimated time for questioning by each party for each witness it intends to question.
August 16, 2021	Commencement of Evidentiary Hearing

There was discussion of the implications of the New York State's goals of reducing GHG emissions and the use of natural gas at Danskammer. What is the lifetime of Danskammer?

New Business

Refrigerants- NYers for Cool Refrigerant Management has literature on how to handle appliances containing refrigerant if placing them out for clean-up days. Most towns in Ulster County do not have clean up days. Central Hudson will pay for working freezers and refrigerators. Town transfer stations and retail appliance stores must handle refrigerants responsibly. Contact Emilie for the literature.

Legislature Report – Energy & Environment Committee – None

Round About

Mary O'Donnell Saugerties: Saugerties is having Community Choice Aggregation outreach meetings and then will launch the program. This is a Clean Energy Community high impact actions. Looking at requiring EV charging stations be put in at new multifamily development, > 10 parking spots. Working on Ashokan release letter for May CAC meeting. Had a presentation

on NY stretch code by Anilla Cherian of HVRC. The Town Board considering. An Anilla is now working for NYSERDA on NY stretch code.

Mark Ellison – Esopus Environmental Board

For May 22 Earth Day – pollinator plant giveaways at Transfer Station, master gardener will be there. Applying for HR Greenway Trails Grant for Sleightsburg Spit for land-based trails. Environmental Board needs new members, hope to meet in person in May. Climate Smart chair is Laura Petit. Riverkeeper May 1 Clean Sweep events on Hudson.

Eric Stewart, Town of Marbletown Environmental Conservation Commission

Marbletown is holding 100% renewable workshop. Looking at stretch code: there is push back from some on building trades for renovations. Looking to add more EV charging stations this is a high impact action for High Impact CEC. There is work on installation of solar panels behind gym on main street. Community Solar. A trail is being put in from Ridgewell Gym to SUNY Ulster.

Simon Strauss: Town of Olive Conservation Advisory Council

For CCA Community Choice Aggregation a local law will be on May town board agenda and then appointment of administrator to move ahead. Olive submitted for bronze certification for CSC. Also working on Clean Energy Communities. Meeting with Woodstock Environmental Commission to find ways to work together. The NRI was a joint effort completed in January. Will work on Open Space Inventory. Will follow up on NY Stretch Code. NYC DEP has Olive evaluate parcels DEP can purchase.

Kristin Schara: Town of Hurley Conservation Advisory Council

Hurly is looking at NY Stretch at Town Board May meeting. They have inquired of DOE about Solarize Ulster. Kristin is participating in Local Champions Program weekly learning about how to run a CSC TF and how to pursue actions and be successful. Cornell Cooperative Extension is doing two projects for Hurley: 1) CSC Resilience planning tool which looks at emergency plans and other plans and recommends how to fill gaps in plans which will help adapt climate change. 2) Recommendation on how to achieve CSC certified bronze.

CAC is working on Ashokan Release letter also.

There was discussion on how to help residents of Ohayo Mountain area with history of wells running dry because of high elevation and bedrock. Solutions included collection of rainwater in cisterns, forming a water district and creating a reservoir, and hiring a hydrologist.

High elevation and rock

NY Rural Water Association Groundwater study by Steve Winkley noted that this area was an issue but did not provide solutions.

Emilie Hauser announced the publication of *Flood Resilience Handbook for Hudson River Public Access Sites from Troy to Yonkers*

(https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation_hudson_pdf/hrfloodhndbk.pdf). She was involved in the development of the handbook.

Emilie Hauser, City of Kingston Conservation Advisory Council

The CAC is having a series of retreats to look at Retreats look at mission and focus areas. The CAC needs more members. Continue to study air quality. Climate Smart Kingston is working on Stretch Code and Climate Action Plan. Food waste study not published yet. CSK has distributed stickers to pizzerias to be placed on pizza boxes to indicate not recyclable.

Adjournment

Eric moved and Simon Seconded to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Next Meeting May 26, 2021 at 6:30 pm via Zoom.

Respectively Submitted,
Emilie Hauser, Vice Chair