

# Ulster County EMC Meeting Minutes May 29, 2014

Meeting was called to order at 6:50 PM

## Members in Attendance:

Steve Noble, Chair, At Large

Kristen Schara, At Large, Hurley

Joe Liuni, Rosendale

Catherine Quick, Esopus

John Sansalone, Gardiner

Amanda Lavallo, UC Dept. of Environment

Jim Littlefoot, New Paltz

## **Ulster County Dept. of Environment Update**

A listing of Environmental Notice Bulletins (ENB'S) and grants available will be posted on the UC website.

Amanda met with the Ulster County Legislature Energy and Environmental Committee to provide them with an update on UC Dept. of the Environmental programs including an updated Sustainability Guide. Amanda also provided an updated profile for the UC's Climate Smart Communities program which included information on actions completed, in progress and future plans. CAC's are encouraged to use the Climate Smart program to help initiate projects. Advantages to communities that adopt the pledge include extra points on NYSERDA grant proposals and state funded technical consulting from the firm VHB Inc.

The green infrastructure project at the UC Environmental Dept. parking lot is expected to be completed by the end of June. The project includes installation of a succession of permeable layers consisting of bioretention soil, gravel, pavers and plants to encourage water absorption and reduce storm water runoff. The Sophie Finn project will use similar techniques.

Comments on the DEP's modifications to the SPDES permit for Ashokan Reservoir releases are being accepted until the beginning of July. Recently there have been wide fluctuations in release amounts which made planning difficult for local groups that use the Esopus. Typically the DEP maintains the reservoir level to around 100% from May until August in anticipation of hot and dry summer weather. After August 1<sup>st</sup>, the levels are ramped down to 90% by October. It was pointed out that even if the reservoir is spilling during a storm, flooding is reduced by the presence of the reservoir.

EMC members are reminded to encourage members of their planning and zoning boards to attend the Planning Seminar on June 9<sup>th</sup> on the use of technology in planning and environmental analysis. This seminar may qualify for annual training credits. Preregistration is required. There will be no regular EMC meeting in June.

The July EMC meeting will be a potluck at the Dept. of the Environment offices on Pearl St. in Kingston.

## **Member Roundabout**

John Sansalone – The Gardiner ECC met with their attorney to work on revisions of their proposed water resource protection law. A similar law enacted by New Paltz was recently upheld by the state court of appeals. There was an informative webinar by the EPA regarding the increase in toxic algal blooms in fresh and salt waters which may be related to nutrient overloading. A bill passed the NYS Assembly banning the sale of products that contain synthetic microbeads. There was an informative meeting of the Hudson River Environmental Society.

Catherine Quick – The Town of Esopus is installing solar panels over their former landfill. The primary goal will be to use the electricity to cut the operating costs of the water treatment plant. The Environmental Board has gained some new members. This is the third year that town volunteers cut back water chestnut vines along the Hudson River shoreline. There is evidence that this is helping to reduce the occurrence and thickness of the vines and native plants seem to be rebounding as a result.

Joe Liuni – The Rosendale CCE is working is undertaking an audit of the sewer plant as a Climate Smart Communities project. After the Marbletown municipal staff moves in to their offices at the former Rosendale Elementary School, they can apply for multi-town grants to improve the energy efficiency of the building. The seminar on the Emerald Ash Borer was helpful. There should be use for the resulting waste wood. Central Hudson is helping to remove many trees. The boundaries of the infestation have expanded quickly.

The Ulster County Sportsmen's Federation participated in the Girl Scout Camporee at the UC Fairgrounds by teaching fishing basics and fly fishing. The UC Youth Fair is scheduled for June 14<sup>th</sup> at Kelder's Farm. There will be fishing, archery, BB guns, bird house building, and a police dog, among the activities. They expect around 230 children.

Kristen Schara – The Hurley BioBlitz had to be postponed because the staging site was underwater. They continue to work on revising their Open Space Plan. Their consultant has suggested that the council study ways to increase recreational opportunities.

Jim Littlefoot – Riverkeeper did not receive the grant to study the presence of pharmaceutical waste in the Hudson. The Emerald Ash Borer training was helpful to the Planning and Conservation Boards. An EC representative is attending Planning Board meetings as needed to stay informed.

Steve Noble – The Kingston CAC had a successful habitat presentation. They are starting the open space planning process.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:55.