

Ulster County EMC

Meeting Notes

March 25, 2015

Members in Attendance:

Steve Noble, Chair, At Large
Cindy Lanzetta, At Large, Marlborough
Kristen Schara, At Large, Hurley
Katherine Quick, Esopus
Jim Littlefoot, New Paltz
John Sansalone, Gardiner

William More, At Large, Kingston
Mary O'Donnell, Saugerties
David Haldeman, Shawangunk
Ann Brandt, Woodstock
Virginia Starke, Hurley
Joe Liuni, Rosendale

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM.

Minutes were reviewed and amendments were noted.

Next meeting will be April 29th.

Ulster County Dept. of Environment Update

Local Law 12, banning the use of most polystyrene foam containers for use by food service establishments, was approved by the legislature on March 17. The measure passed 16 to 7. Plates and bowls are excluded from the ban. The law will go into effect in 6 months for chain stores, and next year for non-chain stores. Businesses with a gross income of less than \$300,000 are exempt. Q – (John) Does the health department have jurisdiction in places where food is sold prepackaged, such as delis? Q – (Mary) How will outreach to effected businesses be handled? A-Steve assumed that the UC Health Dept. will be responsible. Comments provided during both public hearings regarding the law were positive. Containers made from alternate materials are available for about one additional penny per item. There are negatives to all materials with regards to recycling and disposal.

Solid Waste Management Improvement Commission still looking for an at-large member from the public. Participants will advise the county and the UCRRA on a comprehensive solid waste strategy, e.g. land fill siting, how disposal can be handled more efficiently, etc.

New Business

The UC Climate Smart Committee will hold a forum regarding energy efficient street lighting. The event is planned for April 2nd, 4-6 PM. It is open to all; preregistration is requested. John cited a New York Times article comparing LED lights to conventional street lights; LEDs are too bright for some areas or have a comparatively bluish spectrum. William commented that studies had shown that the light from high pressure sodium lights were sufficient to increase photosynthesis in local trees, and kept leaves on trees longer (depending on wavelength).

Supporters are still looking for additional communities to support continued PCB dredging. Contact Manna Jo Greene if interested. GE is being asked to do some hot spot dredging behind the dam and in flood plains. If the dewatering facility is not decommissioned, it is possible that other agencies could use it. The goal is to have resolutions from 100 communities supporting the additional work.

The EMC discussed topics for a future presentation by David Haldeman regarding medical issues and the environment. Suggestions included: Insect borne diseases; allergies from plants or pollution; long term studies on personal care products in the water supply; cancer hotspots in the Hudson Valley; and the health benefits of certain plants. The consensus was to focus on allergies.

Emilie Hauser (via email) – The CAC is submitting the PCB resolution to the Common Council. The Kingston CC asked the CAC to study banning single use plastic bags. The CAC is reviewing the Comprehensive Plan and will submit comments. The Climate Smart Commission is meeting tonight to move the Climate Action Plan forward and to find organizations to partner with.

Ann Brandt – The WEC is working with the Woodstock Transitions group to obtain a hauler for compost in the town. They want to complement the restaurants for composting. Twelve restaurants would participate. (John- need to be careful with runoff, it can be damaging to streams and needs to be contained.) A letter of intent has been signed with On Force to build a solar array. The WEC will have an informational table on April 18 from 12-3 at Sunflower supermarket in Woodstock.

Mary O'Donnell – The town is working on a plan to dredge the Lower Esopus Creek from its mouth adjacent to the lighthouse to the area near the Coast Guard station. The town will look for additional funding to extend dredging farther up creek. The CAC is working on a plan to implement the goals of their Open Space Plan. They are working on outreach materials to educate landowners about on conservation easements.

The town supervisor and board members met with representatives from Pilgrim Pipeline Holdings. The town supervisor asked the CAC to provide questions. Some of the questions that were asked along with responses are as follows: Q - Have they considered an alternate route? Would the pipeline eliminate rail and barge oil transport in the Hudson Valley? A – It would replace barge traffic but not rail. The economics would shift transport to the pipeline. Currently there are 500 barge trips/year (one way empty) Q – What experience does PPH have? A – PPH is a new company but the project team has expertise in the field. They would not provide names for proprietary reasons. PPH has already fired the surveying contractors who harassed people. (Mary – How can we evaluate company if we do not know the personnel? William - Government agencies will know. If is not considered business confidential, FOIL may produce names.) PPH's website shows the names of companies that are on their team. PPH claims that they will be using new technologies that will prevent pipeline failures. It will be a low maintenance operation. Previous pipeline failures occurred between the well source and the distribution source. Q - Would they assume responsibility for costs of cleanup? A - Every pipeline operator must contribute to a cleanup fund, plus a \$1 billion liability insurance policy. They have not considered abandoning the project. PPH will meet with the public when they have enough information.

Katherine Quick– The Birches property owner approached for a community garden. A local scouting troop may team with seniors to create and maintain it.

Virginia Starke- Virginia asked if other towns have had problems with hackers accessing town information through their Wi-Fi systems. The Hurley town supervisor was told by their auditor to eliminate Wi-Fi in town hall. This has prevented data access during evening meetings of the CAC. (Steve – Our staff have a code for Wi-Fi, which can be changed occasionally. The system has security software to block bad content.) The DEP is providing UC with \$2.5 million to remove the CMRR railroad tracks and to upgrade access roads and parking for the rail trail on the north shore of the reservoir. Currently there is 11 miles of rail tracks on DEP land.

Joe Liuni - The UC Sportsmen Federation expects that the DEP lands on the north shore will be closed to hunters due to the proposed rail trail. (William – hunting groups should request a 500 ft. setback.) Based on prior experience with other trails, the maintenance will be the responsibility of the Palisades Park Commission. DEC will be stocking fish in UC waters. DEP will be opening the Shandaken tunnel which may result in more mud deposits and turbid water.

Mary O'Donnell– The Hudson River Estuary Program is planning a workshop on May 21st from 6-8 with the Cornell Cooperative Extension. Kingston, Woodstock, and Saugerties have been invited to participate.

William More- Check pharmacies for signs posted regarding disposal of medications. Disposal boxes should be clearly marked. A group of California parents are suing the Malibu School District regarding PCBs. They allege rules for detecting and reporting the presence of PCBs in commercial and public buildings are not being followed.

Jim Littlefoot– A board member is in contact with NYSERDA and Central Hudson to replace current lights with LED's. They are hoping to get it done this year. Norman Turner, a longtime board member passed away recently.

Cindy Lanzetta – Marlboro is doing lighting assessment. Amanda LaValle will speak at next their CAC meeting. The NYS Association for Reduction, Reuse and Recycling held at summit at Marist College to promote composting. The DEC is becoming more active in the areas of solid waste management and organics.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25.