Ulster County EMC

Meeting Minutes

January 27, 2016

Members in Attendance:

Cindy Lanzetta (Vice Chair), Marlborough

John Sansalone, Gardiner

William A. More, At Large, Kingston

Virginia Starke, Hurley

Kristen Schara, At Large, Hurley

David Haldeman, Shawangunk

Mary O’Donnell, Saugerties

Emilie Hauser, Kingston

Amanda LaValle and Alanna Henneberry, UC Dept. of the Environment

Guests: Larry DeWitt, Rochester CAC; Jo Yanow-Schwartz, Woodstock Organic Waste (WOW); Manno Jo Green, Ulster County Legislature

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 PM.

The minutes of the December meeting were approved as amended.

**Ulster County Legislature Update /Dept. of Environment Update**

A Green Fleet policy for UC is now in place. The UC Chamber of Commerce donated $1,000 to UC to defray the cost of providing “no fee” electrical charging stations. A resolution was adopted to create a Waterways Advisory Commission which will conduct a study of UC waterways to create a maintenance plan. The emphasis of the study will be to mitigate flooding and ensure safety for recreational purposes. There has been 15 years or more of research and study on this issue, especially with respect to large woody debris. Waterway maintenance is a difficult issue because it is an area where environmental, jurisdictional, recreational and safety issues intersect and sometimes conflict. The resolution specified the groups to be included on the committee. The meetings with be public and listed on the UC website. (Q- is the emphasis on flooding or safety A- The focus will be on flooding, recreation and safety.) Manno Jo encouraged EMC members to ask questions regarding environmental issues before the legislature.

Amanda and Alanna plan to provide a summary of info for EMC including DEC Environmental Notice Bulletins that might be of interest to EMC members, and UC Legislature pending resolutions. A suggestion was made to have these kinds of materials provided digitally through the UCEMC website (ucenvironment.org). A listing of foreclosure properties that will be sold by UC is being finalized. Some of these properties are not buildable and offer an opportunity for open space preservation if they were purchased by municipalities or non-profits. The Dept. of Environment evaluates the list to look for such properties. (Q- Can the back taxes be forgiven for nonprofits? A- The starting price is based on taxes owed, but if no bids are offered, negotiations may lower the price.).

The county legislation regarding the ban of microbeads was withdrawn because a federal law has been passed.

There are Climate Smart communities that have signed pledges but are not participating in the program. Manna Jo would like to see Climate Smart committees created in every UC town and for them focus on climate change issues. Ken Panza provides an energy monitoring report covering the town of Woodstock that could be of interest to EMC members

**New Business**

The committee discussed the future direction of the EMC and officers for 2016. The EMC needs a qualified candidate to chair the committee. Suggestions for EMC undertakings included: Supporting CAC’s; education; legislative support; workshops regarding the environmental issues; providing communication between towns and UC regarding initiatives and programs; seminars to planning boards regarding environmental issues such as water resources, SPDES, etc. The theme for group could be energy, climate change and solar energy. There is a retreat for nonprofit groups offered at the Omega Institute. Refer to an ad on the UlsterCorp website for details. Membership on the EMC is open to one representative from each CAC plus an equal number of at-large members. Better publicity for EMC events was suggested.

Alanna will create a Facebook page to publicize EMC events and issues. The EMC could reach out to the colleges and high schools that have environmental groups. Nominations for EMC officers are due by the February meeting. The slate of officers will be voted on at the March meeting. EMC members are encouraged to recruit new members and to approach people who might be interested in leadership positions. Emilie will chair next month. (Q- Is there an age requirement – can high school and college students participate?). Future meetings will be held in Stone Ridge at the SUNY Ulster campus.

**Member Roundabout**

Jo Yanow-Schwartz- The focus of WOW is to reduce solid waste by increasing composting of food waste and recycling. UCCRA has a facility for commercial compost. WOW is working to locate a hauler to collect food waste from restaurants in Woodstock to deliver to UCCRA. Their volunteers will educate the restaurant staff on composting and recycling procedures. The Woodstock Town Board passed a proclamation to support town composting and will provide a truck to transport to UCCRA for town events. WOW volunteers help with waste disposal at town events and programs such as the volunteer picnic and holiday dinners. They provide education and outreach at the farmer’s market. Their goal is for legislation to require composting and they would like support from other towns. The EMC used to do a similar program with recycling at the county fair. The League of Women Voters of the Mid-Hudson Region has a material management study group that is analyzing solid waste. Refer to their website for more information. They are currently working on the issue of paint disposal.

Inviting the UCRRA recycling coordinator to an EMC meeting was suggested.

Mary O’Donnell – The Solarize Saugerties initiative is to start on March 5th for residences and small businesses. They are working with Solarize Hudson Valley. Saugerties is the hub; any resident of UC can participate. They will have 4 workshops including preselected installers. They are looking for ways to publicize. The Town of Saugerties is looking to create a solar farm for municipal buildings. The Bristol Beach property was transferred to NYS from the Palisades Park Commission. The town would like to reacquire the property. The greenway has approved a grant for purchase by the town. It is currently an undeveloped park.

John Sansalone – The ECC had one potential member sit in on a meeting and another inquiry. They received a complaint about a driveway being constructed (25 foot wide with 30 ft. clearance on each side) that traverses a wetland. The wetland is not on state wetland maps. The builder did not follow the site plan. Q-How will it be enforced? On Feb 8th NYWEA will hold its conference in NYC for 3 days. The ECC is still working on a local waterway protection law using Hudson River Estuary Program grant. There was an issue with in-kind work which was resolved.

Kristen Schara – The CAC was awarded an extension on a Hudson River Valley Greenway grant to complete their revised Open Space Plan.

Emilie Hauser – The new mayor of Kingston came to the CAC meeting and talked about organic waste collection and a new tree ordinance. Work on the NRI continues. They will be writing an RFP to hire consultant to write the summary for the NRI. They will also be working on Climate Smart issues.

Meeting adjourned 8:47.