Ulster County EMC

Draft Meeting Minutes

October 28, 2015

Members in Attendance:

John Sansalone, Gardiner

William More, At Large, Kingston

Kristen Schara, At Large, Hurley

David Haldeman, Shawangunk

Mary O’Donnell, Saugerties

Cindy Lanzetta, Marlborough

Jim Littlefoot, New Paltz

Amanda LaValle, UC Dept. of the Environment

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 PM.

**Ulster County Dept. of Environment Update**

Amanda suggested that the EMC have more meetings at the SUNY STRIVE site in Kingston. The next EMC is scheduled for Dec. 9th at 6:30. It is tentatively scheduled to take place at the STRIVE site. Alternatively, it could be at the UC Dept. of the Environment offices if EMC prefer. Amanda provided a 2 page summary of the environmental projects completed by Ulster County to reduce carbon emissions from county operations. The county was recognized as a top green power purchaser by the US EPA. UC was the only municipality of it size recognized along with very large corporations such as Intel, Microsoft, the NHL, etc. UC is buying green power credits in excess of 100% of the energy usage. Large green power purchasers have demonstrated that using green power is a sound business strategy due to the price stability of green energy. The price for bulk purchases is currently less than 4 cents per KWH

The UC interactive mapping tool, REConnect, is now live. Users can get information and links to recreational facilities, directions, places to eat, nearby hotels, etc.

**New Business**

Microbeads, minute plastic particles of plastic used as an abrasive in personal care products such as toothpaste and body wash, have become a major threat to water quality. It is estimated that 19 tons of microbeads per year are being dumped into waste water in NYS. Microbeads are similar in size to the food sources for a number of fish and other marine organisms, leading them to ingest the microbeads and the toxins that cling to them. The chemicals are transferred from plastic to fish tissue once ingested and then bioaccumulate as they are passed up the food chain to larger fish and wildlife. Humans that consume these fish also ingest the microbeads and their associated toxins. Several states have banned their use. The NYS Assembly passed a ban but it stalled in the Senate. A ban has also been introduced in US Senate. NYS counties are instituting bans in order to force the state to do the same. The UC Legislature is considering a ban. The NYWEA supports a ban. John Sansalone is planning to testify at an UC Legislature public hearing on Nov. 10th in favor of a ban. Attendance at the hearing would help to support a ban. Amanda will send out draft local law and John’s position paper. Technical journals such as “Environmental Science and Technology” and for the Society of Conservation Biology have had articles outlining the microbead issue. EMC members can contact their legislators to advocate for a ban. EMC will take an online poll to vote to advocate for a ban at the hearing and in general.

**Member Roundabout**

Dave Haldemann – The Shawangunk EMC is exploring the idea of installing solar panels on top of the town landfill. (Amanda offered help on resources for solar project through NYSERDA and from the EPA.) Placement could be issue concerning wells that may be present and the cap cannot be penetrated. Modification of closure plan to minimize hands on maintenance (access) and sparks can be issue. The town planted trees (locust, oak and maple) in the town park using grant money.

Cindy Lanzetta – Central Hudson has committed to installing LED lighting in the town. (Amanda – look at the pricing they are offering, before the town signs agreement. John - There have been complaints about excessive brightness of LED lighting shining into windows, etc. Amanda - There is a light meter app to measure brightness to make sure light does not exceed current levels. A national standard may need to be created to address these issues.)

Jim Littlefoot – Riverkeeper announced they are going to expand their water sampling to Albany. Jim volunteered to collect samples dropped off by volunteers and transport them to Kingston. Next year they may try to analyze samples for traces of pharmaceuticals. Testing would be done at City College; however they need to get funding. Jim will send a report to Amanda to distribute to EMC. The DEC is going to be involved next year. The Village of New Paltz needs a representative to the EMC. Amanda met with them and advocated for this.

John Sansalone – The ECC is continuing to work on the watercourse and wetlands law. They need to meet with their attorney. There are 1-3 projects involving single family homes proposed in a special zoning district of the Shawangunks. The ECC must review the projects. The ECC has 3 vacancies and needs new members.

Mary O’Donnell – The CAC sponsored a presentation by Sustainable Hudson Valley. There were 20 attendees. They are working to become a Solarize Community. Betta Broad will present the plan to the Town Board at a meeting on Nov. 13th. The CAC and Sustainable Saugerties support the project. At the end of August, an unidentified green slime was present on the Esopus. It was very thick above the dam to Glenerie Falls, which made it difficult to paddle. The CAC requested the Town Board contact the DEC to make recommendations. Diamond Mills is working on a hydroelectric generating plant at the Cantine Dam to supply power to 750 homes. They would have to create a reservoir to support flow rate required. There is some preexisting infrastructure. Mary would like to get information about similar dams.

Kristen Schara – The CAC continues to work on an open space plan. They are currently reviewing the plan recommendations. There is a Planning Board hearing scheduled regarding a new cell tower.

Amanda – UC was successful in obtaining a grant for assessing culverts on county roads and town collector roads regarding ecological issues, hazard mitigation, and flood response. The assessment will provide information for a variety of grants. The UC Dept. of the Environment staff met with the new recycling coordinator, Merlyn Akhtar, at the UCRRA. They toured the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). EMC could tour the facility in the spring.

Meeting adjourned 8:10.