

## **Minutes of the EMC General Meeting May 14, 2008**

**Present:** Carol Chock, Kenny Christianson, John Dennis, Herb Engman, Neha Khanna, Lara Kimber, Dan Lamb, Kariann Mackie-Cunningham, Michael Miles, Ashley Miller, Steve Nicholson, Amy Risen, Larry Sallinger, Roger Segelken, Larry Sharpsteen, Anni Skoler, Jacie Spoon, Gary Stewart, Marissa Weiss

**Excused:** Cliff Babson, Martha Feger, Stan Marcus, Lucia Tyler, Mark Whitmore

**Absent:** Glynn Bebee, Hank Spencer, Roger Yonkin

**Associates:** Peter Harriott, Joyce Gerbasi, Dooley Kiefer

**Guests:** Jeanne Fudala, Olaf Gustafson, Sylvester Johnson

**Staff:** Kathy Wilsea

**Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order by Chair Steve Nicholson at 7:08 p.m.

**Privilege of the Floor** – Jeanne Fudala, a member of Climate Change Action Group of CNY, provided some information from the American Justice Coalition on the opposition of indigenous groups to tradable carbon permits.

**Changes to the Agenda** – Resource Conservation & Development was postponed to a future meeting.

**Status Report: Cornell CDS-RDS Cleanup Projects** – Olaf Gustafson was present from the Environmental Compliance Office at Cornell. He distributed copies of the Executive Summary from the new annual report on the Chemical Disposal Site (CDS) and Radiation Disposal Site (RDS). Both disposal sites were in use in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Prior to that time waste went into municipal trash or was flushed. These sites were created due to a large increase in research that produced such waste. The sites were selected because they were fairly remote at that time. In the late 1970s, Love Canal was identified as a toxic waste site, and in the 1980s Superfund programs started to identify other sites of concern. CU sites were closed, groundwater flow was identified, and both sites were capped and covered. The RDS is smaller than two acres, off Snyder Road, containing mainly animal carcasses that were exposed to radiation and, in later research years, radioisotope cocktails. The record of decision from DEC was released in 2002 with selected remedy, and in 2007 the groundwater recovery system was terminated because it was deemed unnecessary. RDS has a new cap, a slurry wall, and a grout curtain that extends down to the rock zone. RDS is now in monitoring mode and next year will transition to an institutional control permit.

CDS is one acre on Snyder Road with nine disposal cells of chemicals that were buried, burned or evaporated. It operated from 1962-1978. In 1998, CU entered into a consent order with DEC and the steps were almost parallel to RDS. The Record of Decision dates from 1992. The updated cap was installed in 2003-2004 and there is containment for compressed gas cylinders. Groundwater is pumped to the interior so it sucks back any leakage, then that water is treated to remove contaminants. RDS also has groundwater recovery pump. CDS Record of Decision is fully implemented, and DEC is reclassifying CDS as Class 4 – closed, requires continued management.

Olaf provided some data charts, which show reductions in RDS exterior tests after installation of the slurry wall. No contaminants have been detected since December, 2006. They have been checking because the interior southeast side of RDS has increased contaminants in groundwater. John Dennis asked about groundwater and whether or not there are any plans to dig up and move the wastes, since there is no safe level of paradioxane. Olaf said reductions show in tests continuously. Groundwater spread some contaminants before the containment system was installed. Current disposal methods for wastes are (a) excess materials returned to manufacturers, (b) incinerated, (c) short-lived isotopes allowed to expire, and (d) shipped to licensed disposal sites. Disposal site leachates are treated on site. Olaf's chart of total volatile organic compound levels shows seasonal changes, but overall reductions in test results since 2002-2003. He provided a flow chart of the process of filters and ultraviolet oxidation used to treat leachates. Future activities involve continued monitoring and maintenance, implementation of site management plan, monitoring and evaluation of options to enhance remediation efforts.

In response to member questions, Olaf said they are not sure if there are any gases left in the cylinders, as there were no good records. Experts thought they were empty due to broken valves. The containment was designed to prevent damage to the cap in

case of explosion. If any chemicals are left and leaking, it is a slow dissipation. Efficiency of the activated carbon filters produces groundwater with pollutants under 1 part per million. The filters can run about one year, and replacements are staggered. All monitoring steps are done with DEC, and lab analysis must be done by independent laboratories. Rock crushing activity east of CDS is not digging, but crushing of rocks brought from the main campus. Trees that were killed by Dutch Elm Disease were disposed of near there. Paradoxane levels have always been below NYS drinking water limit. It is difficult to find labs that test for this, and a change in methods at the lab produced the consistent, slight increase on the chart. CU used to test for paradoxane in the creek from the site all the way to the lake. Levels dropped off after containment was installed, and none was detected in 2007. Testing is still done from the site to the airport property. CDS analysis tests for over 100 compounds, and wells go to the fractured rock zone, 20-35 feet. Deeper wells are also spot tested, and there have never been any detectible levels in them.

**Resolution 02-2008 – Resolution Recommending County Support for a Federal Carbon Tax** – Kenny Christianson introduced the resolution, which the Energy Committee has been working on since February. He struck Whereas #7 of the draft presented tonight. Amended resolution moved by Kenny, seconded by Neha Khanna. Resolution was further amended. Final resolution passed by vote of 13 yes, 3 no, 1 abstention (Dan Lamb).

**Municipal Reports – Town & Village of Groton:** Due to lack of time, Jacie Spoon will provide a report at a future date. Village of Lansing – John Dennis characterized the intermunicipal sewage conduit as dead in the water. The Village adopted stormwater management laws. A traffic calming design near BoMax Drive, which includes a trail, has created problems for emergency services access. A subdivision plat was filed for a 21-unit housing development. Finger Lakes Land Trust is looking to buy the adjoining bluffs property for protection. Poison Ivy Park would be given to the Village, but the railroad won't give access. Senior housing is proposed adjacent to Pyramid Mall, with a main-street façade. The new Town of Lansing supervisor intends to disregard the comprehensive plan and allow businesses and innovative housing that do not match the vision of the plan.

**Approval of Minutes** -- The minutes of April 9, 2008 were accepted with one change in the Municipal Reports. Final minutes are available on the EMC webpage: [www.tompkins-co.org/emc](http://www.tompkins-co.org/emc).

**Chair's Report** – Steve Nicholson reminded members of DEC Update Day on 6/9 in Albany. He will attend, and offered to car pool. Sustainable Tompkins will have a dish-to-pass picnic 6/7 from 4 to 8 PM in Cass Park. EMC can participate in Ithaca Festival at Stewart Park if any committee wants to put a display together. Cost is \$50. Jacie Spoon has been communicating with RC&D, but hasn't received any specifics on their meetings.

**Staff Report** – Kathy Wilsea reported that Roxy Johnston will attend EMC next month to talk about the Monitoring Plan for the southern basin of Cayuga Lake that has been developed by Water Resources Council and Cornell. They seek a resolution of support from EMC. Dooley and Herb Engman requested the plan be sent to ERC.

**Legislature Liaison's Report** – Carol Chock reported that Will Burbank has begun to serve in the district seat vacated by Tim Joseph's resignation. Agriculture District 2 was recently revised with additions and deletions. The Legislature has set a target tax levy increase of 3%. The Legislature approved a feasibility study to examine shared office space for Office for the Aging and Lifelong. The Governor and Senator Schumer are getting large trucks off Routes 96 and 89. At Facilities & Infrastructure tomorrow, the committee will review a proposal to purchase renewable energy from MEGA. Carol attended a deer control/removal meeting last night, which she found very interesting.

**Member Items** – Because the meeting was running late, members were invited to send Member Items to Kathy Wilsea for forwarding by email.

**Adjournment** – Steve Nicholson adjourned the meeting at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Wilsea, Secretary  
Tompkins County Planning Department

Approved by Council on June 11, 2008