

final

Minutes of the EMC Regular Meeting November 8, 2012

Voting Members Present (15): Spring Buck, John Dennis, Brian Eden, Kate Engler, Darrick Evensen, Martha Ferger, Pegi Ficken, Emily Hamilton, Katie Kelly, Jim McGarry, Scott Miller, Steve Nicholson, Carolyn Peterson, Gary Stewart, Ed Wilson

Voting Member Excused (2): Kenny Christianson, Dan Lamb

Voting Member Absent (5): Poney Carpenter, Bill Halton, Kristine Shaw, Lucia Tyler, Roger Yonkin

Non-Voting Member Present (1): Peter Harriott

Guests Present: Carol Czimback, Fernando de Aragon, Dwight Mengel, George Taber, Ray Weaver

Staff Present: Scott Doyle, Kathy Wilsea

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Chair Steve Nicholson at 4:05 PM.

Privilege of the Floor – There were no guests who wished to speak under Privilege of the Floor. Member Ed Wilson outlined the steps necessary for Cornell University to renew their DEC SPDES permit for the Lake Source Cooling facility, and spoke of the study that will be undertaken and how data will be used by DEC in determining Total Maximum Daily Load for phosphorus. Ed distributed copies of a press release from the Town of Ithaca with corrections/clarifications from Cornell staff, and bookmarks with the web address for the Cayuga Lake Modeling Project (cayugalakemodelingproject.cornell.edu). The study is a \$2 million project that will tie together sampling results and a new watershed model to assess phosphorus sources. Lake Source Cooling draws water from a cold/deep location and releases it at a warmer temperature on the southern shelf of Cayuga Lake, so the process moves phosphorus.

Transportation Initiative of the Year Award – For the Executive Committee, Spring Buck presented the 4th TIY award to Fernando de Aragon (Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council), Dwight Mengel (Tompkins County Social Services), and Ray Weaver (Cornell Cooperative Extension) for the Zimride project. Zimride is an organization that allows people to find rides as a joint effort of businesses, organizations, and private citizens. Fernando said the RideShare Coalition, which has no formality, organized this and applied for a NYSERDA grant for startup. It will be evaluated to see if Zimride, which is a company, should be the program they continue to use. Zimride specializes in colleges, so was excited to expand to the whole community.

Recent Transportation Initiatives in Tompkins County – Fernando de Aragon outlined some programs, such as the regional transportation study, which is still in the planning stage and will work with 7 counties in our region. John Dennis asked how the community can discourage idling of vehicles. Fernando said this will be part of Get Your GreenBack. Guest Carol Czimback encouraged education because turning off an idling engine can save gas. Carolyn Peterson said the City does have an anti-idling law on the books. Carol said when her car died she lost her job and couldn't find any information about transportation programs at that time, and it's important for DSS to share information on these programs and for information to be available to the public. Carolyn pointed out many of these program will become useful for seniors as they quit driving. Dwight addressed Gary Stewart's question about where Gadabout is heading, saying Gadabout is having a leadership transition, which is an opportunity to examine how they work and how to cope with their rapid growth. Ridership is up 13% so far this year. He expects they will need to invest in some smart information technology resources to better manage their operation. They are also looking at partnerships and leverages, and checking many opportunities for improvements. Fernando then spoke about local trails, saying the Black Diamond Trail is getting the two bridges needed for completion, but many culverts need replacement and then the trail will be resurfaced. Town of Ithaca has earmarked funds for the trail near Buttermilk Falls State Park. Because federal programs are shrinking, we all need to stay smart about looking for funding.

Approval of Minutes – The September draft minutes were accepted without change. The October draft minutes were accepted with addition of the names of two guests. Final minutes are available on the EMC webpage: www.tompkins-co.org/emc.

Resolutions – Steve Nicholson announced the UNA Committee wishes to hold draft resolution 03, which amends boundaries, until a future meeting. The Planning Department will help in 2013 with some contract funds to fine-tune the boundary proposals. Draft resolutions 1 and 2 were removed from the table. Discussion: Scott Doyle said Mina Amundson, Cornell University Planner, conferred with Tom Livigne (Cornell Real Estate) and Todd Bittner (Cornell Plantations) and informed Scott that they supported the additions. They also proposed some boundary changes for existing UNAs. The only criticism heard at the public meeting on 10/16 came from landowners who were concerned about people who might want to visit private property.

Resolution 01: Amendment to the UNA Inventory Document for addition of a new UNA to be called Hawthorn Orchard UNA-193 – passed by unanimous show of hands.

Resolution 02: Amendment to the UNA Inventory Document for addition of a new UNA to be called Salt Road Fen UNA-194 – passed by unanimous show of hands.

Concerning sharing information with the public, Brian Eden said we need to have specific language about private property, and no matter is to be removed from UNAs. Some people are very interested in the plants. Information concerning private property should be on each individual UNA datasheet, as most people don't see the whole binder. Steve Nicholson thanked members of the UNA Committee.

Committee Reports – Energy: Brian Eden reported they are examining how to support the Tompkins County 2020 Energy Strategy. The County's current energy contract expires at the end of this year. Peter Harriott and Brian made comments at PDEQ meetings. The County will buy renewable energy certificates. The committee will reassess the situation next year. County Administrator Joe Mareane presented a PowerPoint slide show at PDEQ, which will be reviewed at a committee meeting. Environmental Review: Jim McGarry reported the committee submitted comments on the proposed Newfield solid waste transfer station, citing several reasons DEC should not issue a permit. Gas Drilling Working Group: Martha Ferger reported they met on 11/7 and discussed plans to make a comprehensive survey of sources of road salt used by all town highway departments as well as the County and State highway departments. Our concern stems from the fact that increasing fracking activity in PA is undoubtedly producing more flowback water that may be offered for sale in our area as a cheap source of brine. State of the Environment: Kate Engler reported they have met regularly, and Darrick Evensen joined this committee. They hope to have a draft document in January. Executive: Brian reported the Invasive Species list has been updated, but the old one still shows on Google search. He encouraged new members to sign up for committees at the January organizational meeting. Steve reported the Executive Committee has agendas drafted for the first few months of 2013.

Staff Report – Kathy Wilsea said many members need to apply for reappointment, and passed around blank forms. Scott Doyle reported solar panels are going up on seven County buildings. He has been working with municipalities to develop a draft Hazard Mitigation Plan. Recent storms bring focus to the need for this plan. The group hopes to have a draft document by the end of this year. The County received grant funding to update the Agriculture Plan (previously published in 1996).

Member Items – Gary Stewart suggested EMC meet at the Sustainability Center when it opens next year. Brian Eden attended the public meeting on Hydrilla last night, where lots of information was provided. The Task Force hasn't "crunched their numbers" yet. One sprig of Hydrilla was found at the red lighthouse, but that was the only one found outside the Inlet. Brian organized those people who wanted to talk about the technical aspects of the herbicide, and he stays in touch with them and Roxy Johnston. One variety of Hydrilla in Florida has resistance to aquathol. New herbicides are being developed. The University of Florida has a big federal program on Hydrilla. Liz Cameron, of Tompkins County Environmental Health, reported at last night's meeting that no traces of herbicide were found at the test site between the Inlet and Bolton Point. Steve Nicholson reported Energy Independent Caroline is working with a Madison County citizen on setting up a purchasing cooperative for solar panels. Brian said he has asked Cayuga Heights about using their outfall for hydropower. He toured the outfall this week and the Village is considering a study. On 11/29, Tom Whitlow's class will have a presentation on deer impacts. Ithaca College students are trying to get the State to build a sidewalk down Aurora Street, and Brian thinks EMC should consider supporting that.

Appointment of 2013 Nominating Committee – Steve said the Nominating Committee has the task of forming a slate of officers. The Council votes on Chair in December and three other members of the Executive Committee in January. Darrick Evensen, Kate Engler and John Dennis volunteered. Kathy Wilsea will email information on duties of officers to all members.

Adjournment -- The meeting adjourned at 5:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Secretary, Tompkins County Planning Department
Approved by Council on January 10, 2013