



# EMC News

April 6, 2005

Volume 12, No. 3

## ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

*Submitted by Scott Doyle*

The initial "Spring Cleanup" for the EMC's stretch of highway will be **Saturday April 16th at 9AM** - Meet at the corner of Warren Rd. and Rt. 13. Good times guaranteed.

## WEBSITE COMMITTEE REPORT

*Submitted by Keith Epstein*

The new EMC website is quickly taking shape. We are currently finalizing the layout, and will begin adding content within the next couple weeks. If everything goes according to plan, we will be ready to put it online by the end of May. If there is enough interest, we could show the site at the June EMC meeting before putting it online.

## ENERGY COMMITTEE REPORT

*Submitted by Kenny Christianson*

The Energy Committee met on March 14. Kenny Christianson was selected as chair of the Energy Committee for yet another year. Arel Lemaro of Public Facilities reported that the contract with Johnson Controls for energy efficiency improvements in county buildings has been completed, and that the county has applied for an EPA Power Partner Award for the library solar panels. The committee discussed the need for a sample wind ordinance for municipalities, and Heather Filiberto said that the Planning Department is planning (that's what they do) to hire an intern for this purpose.

The committee developed a draft memo recommending that surplus funds in the county's energy budget be dedicated to the purchase of wind energy for 2005 through MEGA's relationship with Community Energy. Some members of the committee had reservations about spending energy funds on a non-local provider, and felt the money might be better spent on energy efficiency measures or put into a fund for the purchase of future energy technologies. Overall, the sense of the committee was that even though there are limitations, purchasing wind energy surplus funds is the best way to achieve further greenhouse gas emission reductions at the current time.

Incidentally, Kenny heard from Jon Smigelski of Community Energy last week, who said they will not be able to offer the county a price of 1.9 cents per kilowatt hour premium for wind for much longer, as the demand for the current New York State wind supply has been increasing, and there is no immediate increase in wind capacity in New York State in the works.

Finally, the committee discussed possible responses of the EMC to the potential implementation of the Cornell wind study, and our role in the upcoming Earth Day and Ithaca Festival celebrations.

The next meeting of the Energy Committee will be on Monday, April 11 at 5:00 p.m. in the Old Jail large conference room.

## TOWN OF CAROLINE MUNICIPAL REPORT

*Submitted by Steve Nicholson*

On March 10, the Caroline Town Board unanimously voted to support the NYSDEC 2005 Quality Communities Program Grant. Tompkins County and the Towns of Danby, Caroline, and Dryden are proposing to develop a detailed management and protection plan for the 40,000-acre Forest Lands Focus Area. This grant program will enhance the opportunities and incentives for innovative community planning. It will include the development of implementation tools and strategies that can link environmental protection with economic prosperity and community well-being. This grant will also help establish an open-space program to preserve the natural resources and recreational amenities in the focus areas identified.

## TOWN OF NEWFIELD MUNICIPAL REPORT

*Submitted by Cindy Schulte*

1. The Newfield Town Board voted that it cannot support the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan at this time. One member voted in favor. The reasons cited (in no particular order):

- The plan promotes Nodal Development. This may be a preferred method to channel development into existing high density areas, but the Town Board recognizes many people move to Newfield to get away from this.
- Nodal Development could affect how tax revenues are distributed to the municipalities with an adverse effect to the municipal budget if development is channeled away from Newfield.
- In Newfield and other small municipalities in Tompkins County, the schools are the educational, cultural, and social center of the community. During the County's Draft Plan presentation in Newfield it was suggested the County Planning Department meet with the various school boards for input.
- The Board expressed concern over possible land use regulations being adopted at the county level.
- The County Comprehensive Plan does not address funding for implementation.

2. The Newfield Town Board is aware that the EMC is working on a resolution to ban backyard burning in Tompkins County. The Town Board is reluctant to support this resolution for the following reasons:

- **The Board supports limiting backyard burning to brush only, not a total ban on burning.**
- Further information is needed from the EMC on how many burning-related complaints are received by the county and the town.
- Town residents expressed concern over the ability of outlying county residents to afford and access the County Solid Waste Facility.
- Town residents also expressed concern that additional regulations are not necessary as the Town already has the authority to address complaints of smoke or unsafe fires, the Fire Department can address unsafe fires, and the County regulates nuisance complaints.

*(continued on next page)*

*more News!*

(Newfield Report continued from previous page)

3. Lake Source Cooling Monitoring Plan  
The Newfield Town Board was updated on the EMC resolution requesting that the N.Y.S.D.E.C. continue the requirements of the current Lake Source Cooling Monitoring Plan for the duration of the existing S.P.D.E.S. permit ending in 2008. **The Town Board verbally expressed general support for the EMC resolution.**

4. Newfield Water District II Updates  
Permits

- Permits received from Norfolk Southern Railroad, The Army Corps, Dominion Gas.
- Awaiting comments on shoring design and road restoration details from the County, and comments from Albany DOH on permit application.

Land Acquisitions/Easements

- One property owner has closed; several others should close next week.

Cost Estimate

- There might be funds leftover from the land acquisition costs.
- The Town Board suggested any leftover funding be used to replace the 2 inch service line serving Decker Road area with a 10 inch line under Route 13. They cited future possibilities of connecting to the Town of Ithaca main near Treman Park, which would allow greater distribution of public water on that side of Route 13.
- The Town will pursue applying for low interest loans and/or grants through programs with the USDA/Rural Development Agency to fund future district expansion. The Town Board is attempting to plan for future water district expansion and/or supply issues now in an effort to keep future costs down.
- Boring and directional drilling will be the method used to lay waterlines under streams and creeks; there will be no open-cut technology used for the project.

**COUNTY PLANNING WORK WITH MUNICIPALITIES**  
*Submitted by Ed Marx, Tompkins County Commissioner of Planning*

Recent local reports from two EMC municipal representatives reference activities of the County Planning Department. Technical assistance provided by the Tompkins County Planning Department and comments regarding the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan are discussed. I would like to take this opportunity to provide some context and perspective that I hope will better inform the readers of those EMC News reports.

Last year the Tompkins County Planning Department was asked by the Town of Danby to assist them with zoning and subdivision regulation amendments required to implement the recommendations of their 2003 update to their comprehensive plan. We entered into a contract for specific technical assistance services to help the local committee established by the Town to undertake this effort. Staff have worked at the direction of the local committee throughout this process. It was not designed or intended to meet county goals. Fortunately, much of what the Town has included in their plan and the draft zoning and

subdivision regulations complement the principles and policies in the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan that was adopted by the County Legislature in December 2004.

There was also mention in the Danby report that the County Comprehensive Plan didn't provide enough opportunity for input from rural areas. The two and a half year process of developing the plan involved two major efforts to obtain public input. We held public meetings on the draft plan in every municipality in Tompkins County. The plan reflects that broad input and pays particular attention to the needs of rural areas, including a section specifically devoted to "Rural Resources." We believe that the plan is balanced in its approach to rural and urban issues.

A comment in the Newfield report concerns the lack of direct involvement by school districts. There were several issues that were determined very early in the planning process to be beyond the scope of what we could reasonably and effectively address in the county comprehensive plan. Among those issues were human services, public safety, public education and recreation. The plan did include effects upon school districts in our discussion and analysis of the potential fiscal impacts of implementing the plan. School district representatives were invited to a special meeting to review the results of this analysis.

The Newfield report also indicates a concern that the plan would channel development away from the town. The Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan does not favor one exclusive pattern of development as might be implied from the comment. We expect that there will be future urban, suburban and rural development. The Plan does recommend strengthening our existing communities. Sections of the Plan analyze the environmental and fiscal impacts that can result from unplanned development, and conclude that focusing more of future development in locally-designated nodes (i.e., villages and their adjoining areas, and hamlets, including Danby and Newfield) will avoid many negative environmental and fiscal impacts. And, for the record, under New York State law the county cannot regulate land use. That authority lies solely with cities, villages and towns.

We will continue to work with interested communities to develop solutions to mutually identified problems and issues of concern. We believe that through cooperation at all levels of government and between public and private partners we can realize a bright future in all areas of Tompkins County.

**See you at the next EMC meeting!**  
April 13 at 7:00pm  
Members: Remember to notify the  
Chair if you will be absent!  
Steve Nicholson, 539-6923 or  
scnfish@ClarityConnect.com