

**Final Minutes of the EMC**

**Date:** May 12, 2016  
**Time:** 4:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Old Jail Conference Room, 125 E. Court St.

*Attendees:*

Name		Representation	
Steve Bissen	P	Town of Dryden	
Kenny Christianson	P	At-Large	
John Dennis	A	Village of Lansing	
Brian Eden	P	Village of Cayuga Heights	
Bill Evans	P	Town of Danby	
Pegi Ficken	A	Town of Groton	
John Hertzler	A	Town of Ulysses	
Jim McGarry	A	At-Large	
Vladimir Micic	P	Town of Ithaca	
Steve Nicholson	E	Town of Caroline	
Susan Riley	P	At-Large	10
Tom Shelley	P	Ithaca CAC	11
			12

Name		Representation
Linda Spielman	P	Village of Dryden
Ron Szymanski	P	Village of Freeville
Roger Yonkin	E	At-Large
Roy Luft	P	At-Large
<i>Dooley Kiefer</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Jose Lozano</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Scott Doyle</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>EMC Coordinator</i>
<i>Dan Klein</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Anna Kelles</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Legislative Liaison</i>

**Guests in attendance:** Joe McMahon, City of Ithaca Natural Areas Commission

**Call to Order**– The meeting was called to order by Brian Eden at 4:02pm.

**Privilege of Floor** – None

**Presentation:** Joe McMahon, chair of the City of Ithaca’s Natural Areas Commission, discussed the City of Ithaca’s approaching vote which proposes demolishing an old, one-bedroom, dilapidated, abandoned house just below Fall Creek. He reported reasons why it’s an eyesore that contaminated the natural beauty of the area. The City owns the property and will pay for its demolition. Joe asked the committee to support the removal of this structure and adding the parcel to the Fall Creek Natural Area.

Demolition will cost an estimated \$27,000, because of some asbestos in the roof, and there will be clean-up required, but it will help beautify the Fall Creek area.

Brian asked how the park will now be redeveloped now that the bridge is rebuilt. Joe responded that the Ithaca Falls entrance will have a horseshoe sidewalk, and a new double-black-chain railing and fence will be installed near the drop-off on the east side. Public access is available May through October, but significant bridge construction will clog the area. Also discussed were a few more benches, fence extension and the path’s surface.

1 Scott Doyle talked about county's foreclosure process for the properties near UNAs. Last year,  
2 the County supported the City in removing the parcel from auction and considered adding it to  
3 the Natural Area. The County facilitated this by formally forgiving past due County taxes on the  
4 parcels.

5  
6 Next, Joe McMahon reported on Six Mile Creek and the hiring process for park rangers.  
7 Historically, coverage is pretty thin with two rangers. Problems are primarily with visitors  
8 parking in the Town of Ithaca. There's a lot of unregulated recreational activity and a lack of  
9 police support. Last year, some of that activity resulted in a drowning. Historically, there was a  
10 lawsuit from a previous drowning incident which resulted in the first rangers being hired. The  
11 lawsuit requested that the community needed to educate people not to swim there. The County  
12 stepped up recently to offer some funding to hire added rangers to patrol the area. He further  
13 indicated that it's not just an illegal swimming problem. Other problems include nuisance  
14 parking, illegal camping, alcohol consumption, garbage, etc. There was added discussion about  
15 the dam, the water supply and hunting in that area.

16  
17 On May 23, the town will vote on hiring the rangers, which will be two teams of two, with body  
18 cameras. There's been hostility towards the rangers, and cameras will provide evidence if  
19 needed. They'll be unarmed. There was a discussion on bussing people to the area, dredging, and  
20 who is liable if someone drowns. The effect on the UNA ecology has been detrimental,  
21 especially erosion and tree damage. It's everybody's problem – City, Town, County and State.  
22 Funding the rangers should help address a variety of these issues.

23  
24 Brian thanked Joe for his presentation.

25  
26 **Changes to Agenda and Approval of Minutes** – A few minor typos were corrected in the  
27 previous month's agenda. Scott acknowledged. Minutes approved with minor changes.

28  
29 **Committee Reports and Member Questions** – Because Steve and John were not here for this  
30 meeting, Brian will give all the following reports.

31  
32 **Energy** – Climate has been going downhill faster than anticipated. The Arctic Ocean may soon  
33 have a full blue ocean in the center this summer. CO<sub>2</sub> is going up fast. Bob Howarth has been  
34 invited to speak at the White House and is getting more national scientific attention on his  
35 methane leakage research. Bob also recently met with County staff about recalibrating the  
36 greenhouse gas inventory, because the 2008 calculations are substantially different than what we  
37 have now.

38  
39 Brian had a meeting with Ithaca Mayor Svante Myrick about sustainable building practices and  
40 urged proper staffing to address energy and environmental issues. Brian spoke about this at a  
41 Planning and Economic Development meeting. Ed Marx was also there speaking on the Green  
42 Incentive Policy being developed for the IDA.

43  
44 Brian also discussed: the need to get the community's input about what they want up front, rather  
45 than put something out and have the public be against it. • Wind power FAQs are now posted. •  
46 Maplewood will have a 900-bed facility which will triple the size of its existing facility; bore

1 drilling near the recreational area to discover heat pump possibilities. • West Dryden pipeline  
2 will be a major issue. Of 109 people asked for easements, 59 have given permission so far, 50  
3 have not. • New group called New Yorkers for Green Power will tour Ithaca this summer. •  
4 Break Free from Fossil Fuels will be in Albany soon. • Ithaca Festival Parade – all invited to join  
5 our Solar Tompkins or Fossil Free Tompkins group. • Albany Lobby Day and Rally bus trip, and  
6 Brian plans to go. • Governor Cuomo rejected the Constitution pipeline. • Brian will give more  
7 information on any of these topics if asked. • There was a discussion about the West Dryden  
8 pipeline and its impact on the property owners needed for easements.

9  
10 **Environmental Review** – Brian gave a dredging update, saying after extensive planning, we're  
11 in the same place as we were five years ago. The plan is take a foot and half of dredge from the  
12 entire channel, and it probably won't start until 2018 at the soonest. They discussed geo-tubes or  
13 an abandoned mine for the dredge materials. In-lake disposal was proposed as a last resort. There  
14 are no easy solutions, but there is an economic need to keep the channel clear for boats.

15  
16 Next item discussed was lead poisoning in school water supplies. Information was exchanged  
17 about how this happened and that's it's an issue all over NYS in schools, and testing is revealing  
18 it to be a wide-spread problem. Water fluoridation will be discussed in future. • Vladamir  
19 discussed combatting invasive plant and insect species. • Coal ash contamination for places built  
20 near railroad beds was the next topic. • Brian recommends the NY Climate Science new website  
21 -- [www.nyclimatescience.org](http://www.nyclimatescience.org) -- which has good interactive maps and databases on these topics.

22  
23 **Unique Natural Areas** – Brian and the UNA Committee recently walked with Kristin  
24 Guttenberger of Cornell Real Estate and Joanna Duffy from Barton & Loguidice through  
25 Sapsucker Woods to fine-tune the UNA boundaries for that site. It has unique topography.  
26 Hopefully a boundary change proposal will be ready at next month's meeting, reported Linda  
27 Spielman. This has been a three-year process.

28  
29 The Pinckney Road acquisition in Dryden did not pass the referendum vote recently. Instead,  
30 alternative funding strategies are being examined. Steve Bissen added that people of Dryden  
31 seem to not want the property taken off the tax rolls.

32  
33 Scott spoke about a UNA complaint about boundary and associated follow up.

34  
35 **EMC Annual Report** – Needs to be done by June. Last year was the first time in the  
36 committee's 25 years that the report was not completed. We have an obligation to complete this.  
37 March 31 was the deadline for all reports. The Environmental Review was not submitted last  
38 year, which held it up.

39  
40 **Staff Report** – Scott Doyle reported on updates from the County Planning Department.

- 41 1. Foreclosure process – all are reviewed for auction. No 2016 properties have UNAs  
42 located on them. Two properties which were previously withheld from auction – one on  
43 Taughannock Road, the other on Belle School Road – may be included back into this  
44 year's auction as conservation buyers have not been interested..
- 45 2. Helping to advance renewables. Scott met with local planners' teams to talk about solar  
46 and wind energy strategies and public outreach.

- 1 3. Stream classification. A citizen in Danby wants this updated. It's a long and complex  
2 process involving the DEC. Basically, if people note streams that they think require  
3 reclassification, they should let DEC know.  
4 Brian said every stream in NY is classified. Brian said he would like to know how many  
5 classified trout streams actually have trout.
- 6 4. Energy and Economic Development Task Force meets May 18 at the Sciencenter.
- 7 5. Work on the early stages of a capital program for green infrastructure is currently in  
8 progress and Scott would like to speak with the EMC about it sometime in the future.

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10 **Member Items** – None

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12 **Adjournment** -- The meeting adjourned at 5:55 PM.

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14 Respectfully submitted,

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16 Pamela Pariso, Administrative Assistant  
17 Tompkins County Planning Department  
18 Approved by Council on July 14, 2016

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