

TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

**February 27, 2012
Meeting Minutes**

Voting Members Present (18): Sharon Anderson, Fay Benson, Ed Bugliosi, Liz Cameron, Bill George, Barry Goodrich, Roxy Johnston, Joan Jurkowich, Dan Karig, Darby Kiley, Lynn Leopold, Gregg McConnell, Jim McGarry, Frank Proto, Elaine Quaroni, Marjory Rinaldo-Lee, Craig Schutt, Mary Shelley

Voting Members Absent (1): Rick Manning,

Non-Voting Members Present (4): John Andersson, Dooley Kiefer, Jose Lozano, Todd Miller

Guests Present (4): Peggy Merrill, Tom Evans, Brian Breaker, Lynn Szabo

Chairman Frank Proto called the meeting to order at 4:18 PM

Agenda Review and Approval of Minutes – Frank added some items to the agenda: Share information on the copy we received of a letter from EMC concerning a dredging project at the Cornell sailing center, an update from the Hydrilla Task Force, and a letter from the Planning Department forwarding the Clean Water Needs Survey. The draft minutes of 1/23/2012 were approved with no changes. Guest Peggy Merrill, a Groton resident, was welcomed.

USGS's New Applications for Mapping Bathymetry and Velocity with Applications for Flood Inundation, Habitat, and Reservoir Capacity -- Ed Bugliosi introduced USGS staff members Brian Breaker, Hydrologic Technician, and Lynn Szabo, Data Section Chief. They are working on a project at USGS with goals of sharing information and working toward flood management. Brian used a PowerPoint slide show and spoke of his work with the SonTek M9 equipment on bathymetry, velocity and LIDAR data capabilities and techniques. This is ADP technology obtained for mapping, and data can be collected from boats, bridges, or the "clothesline method" of having two people work on the opposite banks of a water body. The data is then imported to a spreadsheet. Data is linked to LIDAR for digital terrain, and the combination then shows underwater depths. The dataset can be used from a couple feet below known low water levels and a couple feet above flood evaluation to show potential flood patterns. Lynn is working on cost estimates. The slides showed data collected in Cayuga Inlet, with field work completed in two days, then another day spent in the office to organize the data. Timeline would depend on extend of detail requested. If done before and after a dredging project, it could exhibit changes and then be used to track needs as they develop. Roxy Johnston pointed out the City's drinking water reservoir could have effective management with this information. Currently they do bathymetry about every ten years. The technology could be used to show channels that require alterations of herbicide application for Hydrilla and/or the proposed drip method of releasing herbicide upstream of problem spots. Roxy shared that Todd Cowan is also working on 3D circulation patterns for the lake, and expects that to be available next year. Craig Schutt said DEC provided an estimate of \$600,000 to map the Inlet, and Joan Jurkowich said this M9 method might be better if it would satisfy FEMA requirements for new flood mapping. Roxy concurred, saying this seems more detailed than the maps from Army Corps of Engineers. Ed thought this could be covered by the capital program agreement for aquifer studies. Dan Karig said no old bathymetric surveys are available for comparison in the dredging planning.

Final Draft Wetlands Model Local Law – Darby Kiley explained the history of this model, which started in 2008 with Nick Schipanski. The model law suggests a permitting system with mitigation plans, with review of permit applications by the municipality's planning board. Action requested today is approval to send the model to municipalities for their possible use. The committee did some field work and found many wetlands that are not

mapped. A municipality could pass a wetlands law to provide another line of protection. She is willing to visit any municipality that has questions. Frank asked if we are suggesting or providing a way for municipalities to intrude on landowners' rights, and Darby said it would be up to any municipality, but the model suggests exempting agriculture land. The model originally went to council members in October to draw comments. With three towns considering enacting Critical Environmental Areas, there was discussion on if this would have impact on those intentions. Darby felt it would strengthen CEA laws, and Jim McGarry pointed out a CEA does not necessarily include a wetland. Darby moved to approve the final draft and distribute it to municipalities, which was seconded by Craig Schutt and passed by vote of 16 yes and 2 no (Proto and Benson). The draft letter will be put on letterhead for Frank's signature. Frank expressed thanks to the committee for their work.

Committee Reports –Executive: Frank said he will discuss the letter from Ed Marx about the Clean Water Needs Assessment with the Executive Committee. Joan Jurkovich said the response needs to be as complete as possible, since the Planning Department cannot provide priorities and research. The WRC Annual Report will be completed when the final committee report is submitted. Grants: Craig had passed around FLOWPA narratives from all counties in the region, pointing out there are big cuts from the state, from \$85 million to \$34 million. Finger Lakes State Parks has applied for a Hydrilla eradication grant of more than \$2 million. The County Administrator and Chair of the Legislature did some lobbying at the NYS Association of Counties annual meeting, and Craig spoke in Albany the next week on Hydrilla (text available in the mail folder). He felt legislators are informed and supportive. \$380,000 has been committed from the Great Lakes Initiative, which is federal money that will pass through NYS. Fay Benson suggesting checking on Sea Grant, too. In addition to all the contacts with NYS legislators, letters are going out to federal representatives. Roxy pointed out if Inlet dredging is stretched out to a ten-year project, it will decrease the herbicide effectiveness. One big dredge would be more useful, although more expensive. The bulk of the work could be one effort. She has prepared a proposal, and the City is fact-checking her document for accuracy of the dredging details right now. Craig reported he and Liz Cameron attended a Hydrilla Task Force meeting today. Experts are now recommending dual treatment with two herbicides, but DEC is not sure. Liz pointed out the second pesticide is not registered right now for use in our type of need. It would be used for metered doses upstream of infestation. Roxy said a pelletized form is also available for spots missed upstream of the main treatment area. Difficulties exist in coordinating the multitude of permits, too. Public notice must be displayed for each phase. Roxy will be talking regularly with Cayuga and Seneca counties about invasive species. A public meeting is planned in a month or two, and the Cooperative Extension website keeps current (<http://ccetompkins.org/environment/invasive-species/hydrilla>). Nominating/ Membership: Craig reported one application has been received for the vacant at-large seat. Water Quality Strategy Update: Bill George offered to coordinate the first meeting, and will contact members. Wetlands: Darby reported on an article she read in "Talk of the Towns", which states NYS is remapping freshwater wetlands, but requires a local initiative to start the contact with residents. She suggested having a guest speaker on this from DEC. Aquifers: Todd Miller reported he can still provide a report on the Dryden study for a future WRC meeting, and USGS staff will be visiting Groton about the possibility of starting a study. Ed said an aquifer study is just a resource analysis and would not have any repercussions for landowners.

Chair & Staff Reports – Frank asked Jim McGarry to discuss the EMC letter on Cornell Sailing Center dredging, which was copied to WRC. Jim said this is a project around their docks, which they submitted to the Town of Ithaca as a SEQR Type II action. DEC permits do not allow spot dredging updates. Hydrilla presence is unknown, and not mentioned in materials provided by the applicant. Location for disposal of spoils was also not mentioned. Frank read the points from the EMC letter, and there was consensus that the Executive Committee is authorized to send a letter to Pat McNally, Cornell's compliance officer.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Secretary, Tompkins County Planning Department.
Adopted by the Council on March 19, 2012.