

TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

**March 15, 2010
Meeting Minutes**

Voting Members Present (19): Sharon Anderson, Ed Bugliosi, Liz Cameron, Carol Chock, Barry Goodrich, Roxy Johnston, Joan Jurkowich, Dan Karig, Darby Kiley, Lynn Leopold, Rick Manning, Gregg McConnell, Jim McGarry, Frank Proto, Elaine Quaroni, Marjory Rinaldo-Lee, Cindy Schulte, Craig Schutt, Mary Shelley

Voting Member Excused (1): Donna Eschenbrenner

Non-Voting Members Present (4): Jose Lozano (Associate), Todd Miller (Ex-Officio), Linda Wagenet, Lisa Wright-Mathews (Associate)

Staff Present (1): Kathy Wilsea (T C Planning Dept.)

Guests Present (1): Scott Doyle, Sarah Zemanick

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

Agenda Review and Approval of Minutes – There were no changes to the agenda. As Carol Chock had not been informed of her appointment as liaison from the County Legislature, she was removed from the roster on the draft minutes. The draft minutes of February 22, 2010 were moved by Joan Jurkowich, seconded by Liz Cameron, and accepted with no other changes.

Report on the Flood Hazard Mitigation Program – Scott Doyle, Senior Planner, was present from the Tompkins County Planning Department. He reported that this program was suspended for several years while the budget was spent on watershed needs assessment reports by Milone and MacBroom. In 2006, the program was restructured and began addressing projects again. The technical committee works on a watershed approach, uses sustainable strategies, supports other planning efforts, leverages other funding sources, supports a long-term approach to stream management, and supports high levels of surface water and groundwater quality. The project selection process includes use of the watershed needs assessment report and municipal input; is conducted by a technical committee of staff from USGS, SWCD, TCPD, the Health Department, and others; and includes a site visit. Prioritized projects are presented to the County Legislature's Planning, Development & Environmental Quality Committee, then to the County Legislature for approval of the County's funding share. Scott showed a project analysis sheet that is used for field analysis.

In 2007, there were eight projects in four watersheds, located in two municipalities. In 2009 there were three projects in two watersheds, located in two municipalities. The County budget is \$25,000 through 2010. The program needs to be examined and re-evaluated during consideration for continued funding by the County. Scott showed examples of the three types of projects: Middaugh Road as a restoration project, Virgil Creek as a vegetation project, and the abandoned railroad bridges in Freeville as a maintenance project.

Lessons learned from the program were that costs are usually higher than estimated, primarily from equipment and operators; a lot of development work is involved; and the Soil & Water Conservation District has a critical role. Scott's overview points were that the program can leverage significant funds, over 600 trees and shrubs have been planted on over 4,000 feet of streambank, stream buffer protection tools were utilized, and it's a plus to enlist the help of youth who are the future stewards.

In the comment period, Dan Karig said it is good to tie in the riparian buffer concept. Jim McGarry asked about changes in the restoration project, and Scott said that site was a previous FEMA project that did not have good stewardship. Lynn Leopold asked what kind of trees were planted, and Scott replied they are native species from RPM Ecosystems, and will be checked annually or more frequently. Rick Manning asked if the list of possible sites

is long, to which Scott replied there are several inquiries for future work, and he is pleased by the interest exhibited. Frank Proto asked if the property owner is responsible for maintenance. Scott said there is no agreement, but there is an implied role of maintenance, especially those with built structures. This aspect will be examined and analyzed by the technical committee for effectiveness. Frank pointed out the program originally was funded by the County, landowner, and municipality in equal shares, and he voiced concern about responsibility for maintenance. The program now looks at downstream and upstream impacts. Former TCPD staff member Kate Hackett encouraged the watershed approach and studies. Joan Jurkovich pointed out other programs look at structures, and this is more focused on vegetation.

Announcements – Linda Wagenet retired (today!) from Cornell, so asked that no mail go to her office. Her email address remains the same. Joan Jurkovich encouraged everyone to fill out their Census forms.

Committee Reports – Aquifer Committee: Todd Miller reported they met briefly. He and Joan Jurkovich have been in contact with officials from Enfield about a possible study there. Frank Proto pointed out the Aquifer Studies are being examined in the County's capital program, so he is glad to have some municipalities expressing interest. Dredging: Dan Karig reported there was a meeting of the City's Project Advisory Committee for Dredging on 3/7. City staff and the consultant reviewed seven or eight spoil disposal sites, and discussed why most are not acceptable. They are left considering the Southwest Park area behind Lowe's. This will require a pump station. The Canal Corporation will not pay for extra pipes. The committee's charge was to think about sites in terms of an immediate site for dewatering and a long-term site for future dewatering. Several WRC members are on the City committee, and will meet 3/29 to produce a common statement. Dan felt the attitude at the meeting seems to have changed, as now they are talking about flooding risk. He feels like that is a scare tactic, while there are really three driving forces: flooding, navigation, and commercial revitalization. Linda Wagenet said she doesn't think flooding is a scare tactic, but does think the ultimate liability for flooding lies with DEC. Dan has asked for the LIDAR data for the City, and has also asked if Steve Eidt of DEC has amended 100 year flood zones yet. There was some discussion on impacts of the entire lake on local flooding risk and the history of the streams and their redirection through engineering. Education: Elaine Quaroni reported that they met and assigned tasks. They want input from other committees on their needs. They intend to help distribute information on the aquifer study program. Executive: Frank Proto reported they collaborated on a letter to DEC with the Monitoring Partnership. This committee has room for one more non-officer, voting member to serve. Lisa Wright-Mathews sent Frank information on stormwater regulations as they will apply to gas drilling sites, and that is being forwarded to municipalities with MS4 requirements and was also in the mail folder. Nominating/Membership: Frank announced this committee needs two more voting members in order to function, per our Bylaws. Streams: Dan Karig said they will meet 3/22 at USGS. Cayuga Lake Monitoring Partnership: Roxy Johnston said she resubmitted a grant application to EPA that was denied last year on a technicality. This proposes pre-emptive dredging in Sixmile Creek. In May they will receive a report on monitoring sites of IAWWTP and LSC, and will study it to check for redundancy. Bill Foster proposes a subgroup to work on public information. Craig Schutt is doing the next article for the Ithaca Journal, and Roxy asked if the following one could be on the Flood Hazard Mitigation Program, which Joan Jurkovich thought was possible.

County Legislature Liaison Report – Carol Chock said she spoke with the Assistant Commissioner of DEC on Friday, 3/12. There is a need for additional requests for a public comments period on the next phase of the SGEIS on gas drilling. DEC is overwhelmed by the 13,000 comments received on the draft SGEIS. Now is the time to write to DEC, and Carol suggested sending a letter specific to another public comment period, as this may prevent the process from going right to the regulatory phase. She will provide an outline to Liz Cameron.

Chair Report – The 2009 Annual Report and a new committee list were distributed. Roxy Johnston will present the Annual Report to PDEQ in April. Frank attended a presentation on the Countywide Intermunicipal Water & Sewer Study, which is a status report of infrastructure and potential for development. It is available on the Council of Governments website.

Adjournment -- The meeting was adjourned at 5:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Kathy Wilsea, Planning Department Secretary
Adopted by the Council on April 19, 2010.