

TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

**May 17, 2010
Meeting Minutes**

Voting Members Present (14): Sharon Anderson, Liz Cameron, Barry Goodrich, Dan Karig, Darby Kiley, Lynn Leopold, Rick Manning, Gregg McConnell, Jim McGarry, Frank Proto, Elaine Quaroni, Marjory Rinaldo-Lee, Craig Schutt, Mary Shelley

Voting Members Excused (4): Ed Bugliosi, Carol Chock, Roxy Johnston, Cindy Schulte

Voting Members Absent (2): Donna Eschenbrenner, Joan Jurkowich

Non-Voting Members Present (3): John Andersson (Associate), Todd Miller (Ex-Officio), Lisa Wright-Mathews (Associate)

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

Public Hearing on Tompkins County SPDES Permit- The public hearing was called to order at 4:25 PM by WRC Chairman, Frank Proto. Senior Planner Leslie Schill, Tompkins County's Stormwater Management Program Coordinator, is out on parenting leave. Kathy Wilsea, Secretary at the Tompkins County Planning Department, was available to answer questions and record comments on the annual report. She briefly informed WRC members that the riparian buffer program was expanded to include contact with landowners in the watersheds of the state parks, and explained that was added to the annual report. There were no questions or comments. Barry Goodrich moved to accept the annual report, seconded by Dan Karig and passed by unanimous voice vote. The report must be submitted to DEC by 6/1 with the signature of County Administrator Joe Mareane.

The Public Hearing was adjourned at 4:29 PM and the meeting of the Water Resources Council was called to order.

Agenda Review and Approval of Minutes – There were no changes to the agenda. The draft minutes of April 19, 2010 were moved by Craig Schutt, seconded by Lynn Leopold and accepted without change. Elaine Quaroni said past minutes did not report on the three applicants for voting seats who were offered associate membership. Kathy Wilsea said Lisa Wright-Mathews has become an associate member, and Ken Zeserson and Judy Abrams declined.

Aquifer System in the Lower Sixmile Creek and Willseyville Creek Trough – Todd Miller, of US Geological Survey, provided a slide show, "Stratified-Drift Aquifer System in Lower Sixmile Creek and Willseyville Creek Trough, Tompkins County, New York", prepared by him and Dan Karig. Providing some history of the aquifer study program, Todd said around 2000 a map of the seventeen aquifer reaches was developed, and the reaches were prioritized by a WRC committee for study. Municipalities were approached about funding partnerships (County, USGS and municipal). Todd reviewed the two types of aquifers: unconfined and confined. Unconfined aquifers are recharged by groundwater and percolated surface water. Confined aquifers have flowing (artesian) wells and specific recharge areas. Aquifer studies are conducted using routine methods of geohydrology, well inventory, surficial geology mapping, test drilling, water level measurements, and water quality sampling. New data employed for this study were LIDAR, which enhances mapping and improves accuracy, digitized soil maps (SSURGO), and

passive seismic information. The area of this study extended from the Tioga County line to the City of Ithaca drinking water reservoir. Todd showed maps and graphics of the ice age, and explained the resultant gorges and farmland areas. In order to conduct the study, it was necessary to find the bedrock depth through seismic testing. The water table was also mapped, using well data from DEC. Todd used a Piper trilinear diagram of water quality studies done to date to show substances found in the water. Water quality is generally good, generally potable. Arsenic was found in two wells in Danby.

Committee Reports – Dredging: Dan Karig reported that three WRC members met with Lisa Nicholas and JoAnn Cornish of the City of Ithaca Planning Department. He said the meeting was “eye-opening,” and characterized the dredging project as a battle between DEC and Army Corps of Engineers. ACOE is making a new hydraulic model, and now says we need to remove 600,000 cubic yards of sediment. DEC is responsible for most of the dredging, and ACOE has a minor responsibility for dredging. The City of Ithaca’s role is to identify a dewatering site. DEC has submitted a budget item, but the chances of getting those funds are “zip”. The City can only fit the spoils in the Southwest Park area. The 1993 flooding came from an overwhelmed watershed and flow from Seneca Creek, not our streams. Dan said it is not clear where ACOE is getting their new data. The Dredging Project Advisory Committee was set up because outreach was specified in the EPA grant. Jim McGarry, the EMC Liaison to WRC, said Lisa Nicholas and Cliff Babson (former EMC member/EMC liaison to DPAC) visited EMC and requested EMC concurrence for examination of Southwest Park for the dewatering site. EMC members could not support the process of examining or selecting a dewatering site in this manner, and sent a letter to DPAC, copies of which were distributed. **Education:** Elaine Quaroni reported they continue to work on the website. Sharon Anderson is planning the design. Although Liz Cameron is not a member of the committee, Elaine thanked her for her participation. **Executive:** Frank Proto reported they did not meet this month. He passed around a letter from Governor Paterson in response to the copy we mailed him of our letter to EPA on the study of hydrofracturing. **Grants:** Craig Schutt said they did not meet. **Nominating/Membership:** Chair Cindy Schulte was excused from today’s meeting. NomComm will meet to prepare a recommendation on changes to the Economic Development seat, to be discussed next month at the council meeting. **Streams:** Dan Karig said they met and established a primary goal to gather information on stream monitoring groups, and where and when they are testing. They hope to interact with Steve Penningroth at the next meeting. **Wetlands:** Darby Kiley announced they will meet next week. **Aquifer:** Todd Miller said they are organizing a continuing education opportunity for municipal code officers, which is a NYS Department of Health training module. The presentation made today on the completed aquifer study has been made to the partner municipalities, and also to the Town of Enfield as part of outreach efforts. **Monitoring Plan:** Roxy Johnston was excused today. Other members reported their last meeting was cancelled.

Chair Report – Frank Proto said the County Legislature will be acting tomorrow on a resolution to reinforce their December 2009 resolution on the dsGEIS on gas drilling. They have also taken action to support NYS legislation proposed by Barbara Lifton. The County Legislature will probably invite Mike Lovegreen (WRC guest speaker last month) to visit and do a presentation at one of their meetings. The next WRC meeting will be June 21st.

Adjournment -- The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Planning Department Secretary
Adopted by the Council on June 21, 2010.