

# TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

**June 21, 2010  
Meeting Minutes**

**Voting Members Present (15):** Sharon Anderson, Liz Cameron, Carol Chock, Barry Goodrich, Roxy Johnston, Joan Jurkowich, Dan Karig, Lynn Leopold, Gregg McConnell, Frank Proto, Elaine Quaroni, Marjory Rinaldo-Lee, Cindy Schulte, Craig Schutt, Mary Shelley

**Voting Members Excused (2):** Darby Kiley, Jim McGarry

**Voting Members Absent (2):** Ed Bugliosi, Rick Manning

**Non-Voting Members Present (4):** John Andersson (Associate), Dooley Kiefer (Associate), Todd Miller (Ex-Officio), Linda Wagenet

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

**Guests Present (2):** Bill Foster, Hilary Lambert

Chair Frank Proto called the meeting to order at 4:26 PM.

**Agenda Review and Approval of Minutes** – There were no changes to the agenda. The draft minutes of May 17, 2010 were moved by Craig Schutt and seconded by Barry Goodrich. Kathy Wilsea said she had received a request from Elaine Quaroni to identify Sharon Anderson as the person developing the web design, as mentioned in the Education Committee report. Amended minutes passed by voice vote with one abstention (Johnston).

**The Floating Classroom** – Bill Foster was present. He said the concept originated in a recommendation for an education program in the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network's Restoration and Protection Plan. Dennis Montgomery started it and put a boat on the lake in 2003. Bill became a year-round employee in 2008. Technically, this is a subcommittee of the Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Organization, but they are considering becoming a separate not-for-profit organization. The IO provides about one-third of their funding by providing scholarships for participants. Bill said experience has shown education to be more cost effective than engineering or regulations. Programming occurs through Tiohero Tours, which provides the boat and staff. Guiding principles are equity for all communities, local learning, local resources, direct experiences, science for society, and sense of place.

Public eco-cruises are available, along with school projects and stream study. Right now Trout Unlimited sponsors Trout in the Classroom for nine local elementary schools. Each school project raises trout for six months, adopts a stream, releases the trout fry, and keeps a blog. The main cost to this elementary school program is tank setup. Middle school students move onto the lake. This year all Boynton 7<sup>th</sup> graders and half of DeWitt 6<sup>th</sup> graders participated. The theme is usually flood runoff. Once on the lake, they take a lake ecology focus, with sampling, use of secchi disk, and VanDorn testing. On the high school and college level, projects are targeted. The Floating Classroom also conducts summer camps for preteens. They also are working to expand their public programs, which provide more visibility, and this summer began Thursday cruises with guest presenters. Citizens who can't afford fees may qualify for a reduced price by asking for a voucher at various locations, with the vouchers supported by the Park Foundation. In total, the project hosts over 4,000 participants per year. A simple half-page survey is conducted at the beginning of tours to gauge public perception of the health of the lake. Bill didn't think he could get participants to do a followup exit questionnaire for comparison. Frank Proto suggested having the WRC Education Committee help develop a few more questions.

In the comment period, Bill said he works with three other instructors and three captains, but he is the only full time staff member. The Floating Classroom has obtained some funding from the County's Strategic Tourism Planning Board tourism grants. They are not always operating at capacity.

**Update on Developing a WRC Website** – Sharon Anderson brought information on the mockup she has been working on. She provided a temporary web address so members can check it out. The site will have meeting information, membership application procedure and form, agendas, minutes, annual reports, etc. It will also provide information about

our members and how WRC functions: officers, committee chairs, types of seats. Comments can be sent to Sharon before the next committee meeting on July 12.

**Discussion on Economic Development Seat** – Cindy Schulte will send a full report by email. The committee met to organize their thoughts on the ED seat. She read the description established in 2005: “Economic Development -- this seat is to be filled by a representative of economic development interests in Tompkins County and is distinct from the Business and Industry seat (i.e., TCAD, Chamber of Commerce, tourism, Workforce Development).” They considered four scenarios: keep the seat even if vacant, retain as ED but allow to fill as at-large during vacancies, convert to a municipal planning seat (which was requested before and PDEQ did not support), or convert to at-large. Committee members agree this long-term (six years) vacancy is not in the interest of the group as a whole. It has been unproductive to recruit from the existing contact list. They recommend converting the seat to at-large because of the perpetual vacancy. Cindy asked Frank Proto to express why he supports keeping it as ED. Frank said we have 20 other seats, and good attendance. Citing the EMC ability to fill vacant municipal seats as at-large, he said he feels that dilutes the purpose of the intended membership structure. At WRC, our members share information back and forth with their stakeholder groups, and he finds that preferable to having a 6<sup>th</sup> at-large seat. As the Legislature’s former liaison to EMC and current liaison to WRC, Carol Chock said EMC had periods of so much interest that they appointed associate members to work on committees. On the Strategic Tourism Planning Board, there is a controversy under discussion on whether or not members can think generically or only for the stakeholder group they represent in their seat assignment. Carol said she likes the idea of an ED seat, but recognizes we have trouble recruiting for it.

Returning to Cindy’s report, she said the committee members discussed this and brainstormed. She seeks feedback on the current issues being faced by WRC and what skillsets and knowledge would be best integrated into our membership. The committee welcomes more ideas, and provided these five they came up with: water chemistry, water law, environmental law, municipal planning board member, or retain economic development. The committee also feels there should be discussion every June about priorities the Nominating Committee should keep in mind when recommending applicants. Joan Jurkowich suggested scenario #5: eliminate the seat entirely. Kathy Wilsea asked for specific ideas on recruiting if members recommend retaining the ED seat. Comments and suggestions should be emailed to Cindy prior to the committee meeting on 6/28.

**Committee Reports – Grants:** Craig Schutt reported that FLOWPA received some Great Lakes funding for ag-topic projects. **Streams:** Dan Karig reported they met to examine the Community Science Institute website. CSI and USGS are the two major sources of stream data. They reported to Steve Penningroth that the CSI site is not user friendly. They continue to work on a template, using the Aquifer Committee’s chart as a model. **Cayuga Lake Monitoring Partnership:** Roxy Johnston said she was unable to attend, but the last meeting had a speaker on duplication of data collection. She will get more information for members. The last of the Cayuga Lake 2.0 newspaper articles has appeared, on Climate Change by Sharon Anderson. **Aquifer:** Todd Miller reported the Aquifer Committee continued preparations on a presentation for a training session for Code Enforcement Officers in August. Negotiations continue with Towns of Newfield, Enfield, and Groton to establish a contract for a new study. USGS is working with Soil and Water Conservation District and Tompkins County to have the LIDAR data made available through the USGS national LIDAR web viewer. They are examining ways to divvy up large files. Frank Proto requested that Todd do a presentation on the Sixmile Creek study for the Legislature, so they understand the wealth of information produced by their capital program.

**Chair Report** – Frank Proto reported that Donna Eschenbrenner has resigned from her at-large seat. Steve Penningroth will make a presentation to WRC at the July 19 meeting on data trends from the stream monitoring program. The Community Science Institute website has some comparison data for streams, Lake Source Cooling, and other test sites. Dan Karig recently had a guest letter in the Ithaca Journal recommending that citizens who support having a new paddler’s launch site provide comments to the City. Frank asked what members wanted to do about meeting in August. Craig Schutt moved to cancel the August meeting, which was seconded by Roxy Johnston and passed by voice vote.

**Announcements/Other Business** – Carol Chock said the EPA hydrofracturing study is taking comments, and suggested members check the EPA website, where they can make comments online. Carol also reported that WRC member Rick Manning participated in the groundbreaking for Phase III of the Cayuga Waterfront Trail this morning.

**Adjournment** -- The meeting was adjourned at 6:08 PM.

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