

TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

**October 18, 2010
Meeting Minutes**

Voting Members Present (15): Sharon Anderson, Liz Cameron, Carol Chock, Roxy Johnston, Joan Jurkowich, Dan Karig, Darby Kiley, Lynn Leopold, Rick Manning, Gregg McConnell, Jim McGarry, Frank Proto, Marjory Rinaldo-Lee, Cindy Schulte, Mary Shelley

Voting Members Excused (4): Ed Bugliosi, Barry Goodrich, Elaine Quaroni, Craig Schutt

Non-Voting Members Present (4): John Mawdsley (Associate), Todd Miller (Ex Officio), Steve Penningroth (Associate), Lisa Wright-Mathews (Associate)

Guests: Scott Gibson, Aaron Ristow

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

Chair Frank Proto called the meeting to order at 4:20 PM.

Agenda Review and Approval of Minutes – Because County Legislators needed to leave early, agenda items were addressed out of order. The draft minutes of September 20, 2010 were accepted without change.

Resolution: Expressing Opposition to the Chesapeake Bay TMDL Regulatory Proposal by the EPA – The original draft received with the agenda was moved by Dan Karig and seconded by Cindy Schulte. Aaron Ristow was present from Soil & Water Conservation District. Aaron outlined some of the problems with the model being used by EPA: it is constantly being updated by the University of Maryland using ag census, statistics, estimates and opinions. Impacts of the components can't be explained. Goals are lowered without giving credit for management practices. He characterized it as a highly inaccurate model with moving targets. The University of Maryland bases it on farm practices in areas with limited land, whereas our farms are low-intensity and rotate grazing while keeping land cover. Maryland farmers operate closer to streams and allow grazing to bare ground. If all of the Chesapeake Bay watershed used our farm practices, there would be no need for the TMDLs being proposed. The Chesapeake would get hardly any improvement from changes in NYS practices, but we could spend millions trying to achieve the goals. EPA wants all NYS farms with even one animal each to be CAFOs (confined animal feeding operations), and then CAFOs can be regulated with manure storage facilities and management plans. EPA will hold public meetings next week. Aaron provided some handouts from the Upper Susquehanna Coalition.

Frank Proto and Carol Chock left for a County Legislature budget meeting before the discussion was completed. Roxy Johnston took over the meeting as chair. Members had many questions and concerns, and felt clarity could not be achieved at today's meeting, in part because there was no information on opposing views. Many disliked providing comments for a topic on which they were uninformed. Amendments proposed by Dooley Kiefer were also shared by email before the meeting and at the meeting. Gregg McConnell, who holds the WRC agriculture seat, said the EPA proposal is heavy-handed, and would change lifestyles for farmers. Our region doesn't have a lot of CAFOs, which are typically 1 ½ acre per cow. Here we usually have 3 acres per cow and small operations. Roxy suggested postponing action until the November meeting or establishing an ad hoc committee, which could include some members of the Monitoring Plan committee. She would like to draw some comments from the Monitoring Plan committee members, as the WRC member comments today sound like Monitoring Plan committee comments on DEC not listening to our local knowledge about Cayuga Lake. Liz Cameron moved to address the issue with input from an ad hoc committee and members of the Monitoring Plan partnership, which was seconded by Gregg McConnell. Roxy will facilitate a meeting, and a letter or resolution will be drafted for finalization by the WRC Executive Committee prior to the County Legislature meeting on November 3. Motion passed by voice vote

12 yes, 1 no (Schulte). WRC members willing to serve on the ad hoc committee are Roxy Johnston, Liz Cameron and Gregg McConnell. Craig Schutt will be contacted about serving.

City of Ithaca Drinking Water Upgrade – Scott Gibson said this project is moving along and it is time to start getting information out to the public. Engineers O'Brien & Gere are defining technical needs for the new plant. The project involves decommissioning the old plant and building a new one on a very small site with uninterrupted service. Probably some portable, temporary units will be used, and Bolton Point and Cornell will help provide adequate drinking water during the building phase. Scott also explained changes that will be made to the intake system, dredging of the reservoir to reclaim volume, and rehabilitation of the natural area around the water plant. The City hopes to put the design out for bid by mid-November 2010 and proceed to selection of a construction contractor by the end of 2011.

Committee Recommendations for Appointments – Cindy Schulte, chair of the Nominating Committee, asked if there were questions on the proposed slate, which was provided with the agenda. The Committee recommends reappointment of all members who applied, and appointment of two new applicants to voting seats. The other two new applicants are recommended for associate membership (one at his own request following discussion with the committee). The Committee also recommends reappointment of Dooley Kiefer and John Andersson to associate membership. The slate will be subject to vote at the WRC meeting in November, then proceed to PDEQ and the County Legislature. The Committee chose not to act on one application that was received late. Applications were available for review by members. Gregg asked about an applicant who is already a member of the Environmental Management Council, and was told she will not be renewing her membership on EMC.

Committee Reports – Streams: Dan Karig reported they are interacting with Eric Roof, Compliance Officer for the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, to learn more about water extraction permits for hydrofracturing. Monitoring Plan: Roxy reported she had a small meeting with Linda Wagenet and Gary Stewart. Aquifer: Todd Miller reported they continue to seek new study participants. Education: Joan Jurkowich said they will meet 11/8 to plan for next year.

Staff Report – Kathy Wilsea said the Nominating Committee has another task, which is contacting members to build a slate for officer elections for 2011. The County Planning Department welcomes a new Planner, WRC member Darby Kiley.

Announcements – Cindy Schulte announced the pharmaceuticals collection event gathered 741 pounds of material. This is a lower quantity than the March event, but they were busy all day. Roxy Johnston announced a conference to be held on Saturday morning, sponsored by the Network and IO. This is on drilling, climate change, and dredging, and will be at the Unitarian Annex. This fits in with the Bioneers Conference, which resumes in the afternoon at Ithaca College. Rick Manning told members that the construction they see outside the Transit Center is Phase III of the Cayuga Lake Waterfront Trail. Cindy Schulte announced an upcoming Soil & Water symposium.

Adjournment -- The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Planning Department Secretary
Adopted by the Council on November 15, 2010.