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TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

**December 17, 2012
Draft Meeting Minutes**

Voting Members Present (14): Sharon Anderson, Fay Benson, Ed Bugliosi, Barry Goodrich, Roxy Johnston, Joan Jurkowich, Dan Karig, Darby Kiley, Lynn Leopold, Jim McGarry, Frank Proto, Elaine Quaroni, Marjory Rinaldo-Lee, Mary Shelley

Voting Members Excused (4): Liz Cameron, Rick Manning, Gregg McConnell, Craig Schutt

Voting Member Absent (1): Bill George

Non-Voting Members Present (#): John Andersson, Dooley Kiefer, Todd Miller

Guests: Brett Hayhurst (USGS), Ed Wilson (Cornell)

Staff Present: Kathy Wilsea

Chairman Frank Proto called the meeting to order at 4:17 PM

Agenda Review and Approval of Minutes – Agenda items will be taken out of order. Draft minutes were accepted without change. Final minutes are available on the WRC website: <http://www.tompkins-co.org/planning/committees/WRC/WRCagendaminutes.htm>

Finalizing Comments to DEC – Roxy Johnston handled edits for the ad hoc committee re Lake Source Cooling Permit and Total Maximum Daily Loads. With two minor edits, the version of the comment letter that was circulated by email on Friday, 12/14, was accepted by consensus to be sent to DEC with Frank Proto's signature.

Roxy reported for the committee that they are working separately on TMDL and the SPDES permit for Lake Source Cooling. She passed around copies of an October letter from EPA directing DEC to begin the TMDL process. The committee will draft a comment letter to EPA for review at the January WRC meeting.

Jim McGarry reported on the public meeting sponsored by EMC that was held 12/13. There were speakers, slide shows, and a question and answer period. DEC seemed to be further along than he expected on arranging the watershed modeling study, and this could be a problem for people who think they can join the dialog at the TMDL stage. John Halfman's data has links to weather patterns and wet or dry years. It has enormous swings week to week and year to year. Roxy said Jeff Myers has committed to examining historical data, much of which is available from Dave Bouldin. Steve Effler said the study by UFI will include samples from deep and shallow waters.

Aquifer Committee Report on 2012 Work – Todd Miller provided a slide show, with data analysis on 100 well sites (data from Tompkins County Dept. of Health and USGS). Elevated arsenic was found in 8% of the sample, with most important sources being pyrite (fool's gold) and iron oxides but their presence in rock doesn't always correlate to water quality. Arsenic in drinking water increases cancer risk. The EPA maximum contaminant level has been 10 parts per million since 2001. In Fay Benson's examination of the dairy component of committee work, he found presence of arsenic in water does not transfer into cow's milk or cheese, but is excreted in urine.

Committee findings: Elevated levels of arsenic are most likely to be found locally in confined and gravel aquifers; moderate levels are most likely found in confined sand & gravel and some shale, and unconfined aquifers are least likely to yield arsenic. While it is difficult to predict where arsenic will be found, we can predict it won't be found in unconfined aquifers. Todd showed correlation of found arsenic to bedrock type for wells with arsenic. He

finds no explanation for finding no arsenic in bedrock wells drilled to below 200'. Statistically, our test results have slightly better quality than national averages. Lynn Leopold asked if some contaminants can be transported here, and Todd replied they could but we don't know the source of contaminants in confined aquifers. Dan Karig said around here black shales have pyrite, and maybe when it is oxidized it releases arsenic. Todd referred members to www.EPA.gov/nrmrl/wswrd/dw/arsenic/index.html for further information.

Dan said he was of a minority opinion on the committee. He feels any amount of arsenic can be harmful to health, as it has a cumulative effect with years of exposure. He is treating drinking water in his home because his wife was very concerned. Roxy warned that all maximum contaminant levels are developed by EPA with some consideration given to cost for mitigation/enforcement. Joan asked if any of the high levels are in public drinking supplies. Todd said all three Dryden wells test high, and Dryden has hired a consultant to develop treatment. The committee plans to develop a fact sheet for public use. Dooley asked about sources, and John Andersson said it used to come from pressure-treated lumber, which was banned in 2001, and some pesticides, which were banned in the early 1990s.

Committee Reports – Monitoring Partnership: Roxy said they will meet with DEC and Cornell if the LSC SPDES permit is approved.

Education: Elaine Quaroni reported they continue with support for the Hydrilla Task Force. Tom Evans, of Southern Tier East Regional Planning & Development Board, spoke at the end of last month's WRC meeting seeking training ideas. He sent an email today with more details. She asked that members check that email and send ideas to her. She will interact with Tom Evans. Frank suggested cross-referencing his ideas with the Water Quality Strategy, and said the committee may have a role in developing arsenic education materials.

Executive: Frank said they did not meet, but had been ready to finalize the letter to DEC discussed earlier.

Ad Hoc Committee on Gas Drilling Regulations: Marjory Rinaldo-Lee is chairing this committee, with Liz Cameron, Darby Kiley and Elaine Quaroni contributing. They are putting together a spread sheet of the old comments and DEC responses. The current DEC document does not note changes from the 2011 document. She has contacted DEC, trying to find a tracked-changes version. The committee will try to incorporate some sGEIS comments into this round of comments.

Grants: Craig Schutt was excused today. Ed Bugliosi reported the agreement for the Enfield aquifer study has been signed.

Nominating/Membership: Barry Goodrich reported the membership slate was approved by PDEQ and will go to the County Legislature 12/18. He has received response from four members who are willing to serve as officers, and officer elections will occur at the January meeting.

Wetlands: Darby Kiley reported the committee met on mapping, possibly working with Nick Hollingshead, and applying for funding for updates.

Hydrilla Task Force: Roxy reported all outreach funds are being processed. They are working on a management plan for 2013, and will review Bob Johnson's data through the winter. DEC wants a state-wide management plan. The job description for Project Manager has been released.

Chair and Staff Reports – Frank reported he met with Congressman-elect Tom Reed's staff representative. Reed will seek federal funding through invasive species programs for treating Hydrilla. Reed will be holding town hall meetings after he takes office in January. Concern was expressed re fracking. Frank reminded members the January and February meetings have been postponed one week – check the dates at the bottom of today's agenda. Kathy Wilsea reported Leslie Schill has left the Planning Department staff, and Katie, Joan and Ed will be working to finish the regional sustainability plan and other projects. The push is on again to vacate the basement store room in the Old Courthouse to make room for the Legislature's move.

Adjournment -- The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Secretary, Tompkins County Planning Department.

Adopted by the Council on January 28, 2013.