

**EMC Final Minutes
Dec. 11, 4:00 p.m.
Via Zoom**

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Attendance

Member		Seat	Member		Seat
Dan Antonioli	P	At-Large	Susan Riley	P	At-Large
Steve Bissen	E	Town of Dryden	Barry Siebe	P	Town of Groton
Christine Collins	P	Town of Ulysses	Elaine Tietjen	P	At-Large
Cait Darfler	P	At-Large	Brad Will	E	At-Large
Edward Dubovi	E	Town of Lansing	Jack Zinda	P	At-Large
Ace Dufresne	P	Student 1	<i>Kathleen Yen</i>	P	<i>Associate</i>
Thomas Hirasuna	P	At-Large	<i>Brian Wendel</i>	P	<i>Associate</i>
Siobhan Hull	E	City of Ithaca	<i>Anne Koreman</i>	P	<i>Legislative Liaison</i>
Peter McDonald	P	Town of Danby	Darby Kiley	E	Tompkins Co. staff
Melissa Millspaugh	P	Town of Enfield	Kristin McCarthy	P	Tompkins Co. staff
Steve Nicholson	P	Town of Caroline			

5 **Guests:** Frank Cantone, Pete Loucks

6 **Call to Order/Breakout Rooms** – Chair Cait Darfler called the meeting to order at 4:04pm.

7 **Agenda Review/Public Comment** –Business items were moved to earlier in the meeting for quorum
8 purposes.

9 **Approval of Minutes** – The November 2025 draft minutes were approved (motion by Barry Siebe,
10 second by Melissa Millspaugh) as submitted. Motion carried.

11 **Action: Recommend Kathleen Yen (At-Large) for Appointment**

12 Cait Darfler made a motion, which Susan Riley seconded, to recommend the Tompkins County
13 Legislature appoint Kathleen Yen and Brian Wendel as at-large members of the Tompkins County
14 Environmental Management Council. Motion carried.

15 **Action: Elect 2026 Chair and Vice Chairs**

16 On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Steve Nicholson presented the slate of officers for 2026. Cait
17 explained duties of executive committee and officers.

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19 Steve Nicholson made a motion, which Barry Siebe seconded, to nominate Cait Darfler for chair and
20 Christine Collins, Steve Nicholson, and Susan Riley for vice chairs of the Tompkins County Environmental
21 Management Council. There were no nominations from the floor. Motion carried.

22 **Legislative Liaison Update (as needed)** – Group thanked outgoing legislator Annie Koreman for her years
23 of service and regular attendance at EMC meetings. Annie provided context about upcoming legislative
24 changes, noting the County Legislature will reorganize in January with half new members and half
25 returning legislators. She noted several new legislators are supportive of environmental issues and
26 thanked the EMC for its valuable work.

27 **Deep Dive: Strategic Planning**

28 The group continued working on the strategic planning process, focusing on finalizing the committee
29 structure and goals for 2026. Significant discussion centered on the Unique Natural Areas (UNA)
30 committee, with members expressing strong support for maintaining it as an ongoing committee.
31 Attendees discussed how to effectively use full meeting time, with Ace suggesting each committee lead
32 an entire meeting once or twice per year to provide comprehensive updates and facilitate meaningful
33 discussion rather than brief reports. The group acknowledged challenges around distributing members
34 appropriately across committees, particularly the need to strengthen the legislative affairs committee,
35 and emphasized the importance of coordination between committees. Attendees divided into breakout
36 rooms to work on committee goals and membership. The outreach committee reported having several
37 ongoing projects plus plans to enhance engagement with nongovernmental organizations, high schools,
38 and graduate students for public education programs. The legislative affairs committee scheduled a
39 meeting to develop talking points.

40 **Reflections on 2025 and Hopes for 2026** – Ace shared responses from a survey asking what people love
41 about the EMC. Responses highlighted members' dedication and commitment, the quality and expertise
42 of participants, representation from different parts of the county, the breadth of knowledge and issues
43 addressed, focus on unique natural areas, opportunities for teenagers to participate, and the EMC's
44 voice in contributing to county decisions protecting environmental resources.

45 **Staff Report** (*as needed*) – None

46 **Member Updates** – Cait shared information regarding recent PEEQ committee discussions about
47 mattress recycling and potential future recycling programs being explored by the County Recycling and
48 Materials Management Department in anticipation of possible landfill bans. It was also reported that the
49 department is looking to update permitting and tracking processes for biosolids haulers in the coming
50 year, and that the Climate and Sustainable Energy Advisory Board has expressed interest in learning
51 about the EMC's strategic planning process.

52 **Adjournment** – Chair Cait Darfler adjourned the meeting at 5:20pm, reminding members that the
53 January meeting would be held in person at the Tompkins Center for History and Culture.