

EMC Final Minutes
Dec. 14, 4:00 p.m.
Via Zoom

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Attendance

Member		Seat	Member		Seat
George Adams	A	Town of Danby	Regi Teasley	P	At-Large
Steve Bissen	E	Town of Dryden	Jeff Walker	A	Village of Cayuga Heights
Christine Collins	P	Town of Ulysses	Brad Will	P	At-Large
Tom Corey	A	Village of Dryden	David Wolfe	P	Town of Lansing
Cait Darfler	P	Village of Trumansburg	Ingrid Zabel	P	Town of Ithaca
Marc Devokaitis	A	At-Large	<i>Anne Koreman</i>	P	<i>Legislative Liaison</i>
Pegi Ficken	A	Town of Groton	<i>Lindsay Dombroskie</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Brandon Hoak	P	At-Large	<i>Karen Edelstein</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Rick Neville	A	Village of Groton	<i>Jason Fenn</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Steve Nicholson	P	Town of Caroline	<i>Thomas Hirasuna</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Peter Penniman	P	Town of Enfield	<i>David Weinstein</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Susan Riley	P	At-Large	<i>Robert Wesley</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Larry Sallinger	P	At-Large	Darby Kiley	P	Tompkins Co. staff
Lisa Strayer	P	At-Large	Kristin McCarthy	P	Tompkins Co. staff
Ron Szymanski	P	Village of Freeville			

5 **Guests:** Jack Timmons

6 **Call to Order** – Chair Cait Darfler called the meeting to order at 4:03pm.

7 **Agenda Review/Public Comment** – No changes to the agenda or public comment.

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9 **Approval of Minutes** – The November 2023 draft minutes were approved (motion by Peter Penniman,
 10 second by Ingrid Zabel) as submitted.

11 **Presentation: Introduction to the Tompkins Pollinator Pathway: Connecting with Communities in the**
 12 **County – Brandon Hoak**

13 Brandon’s presentation on the Tompkins Pollinator Pathway program explored the importance of native
 14 plants and pollinator-friendly gardens for ecological health. Brandon outlined the Pathway's website,
 15 newsletter, mapping system, and new badge program designed to incentivize pollinator-friendly
 16 practices. He also provided core definitions for key terms. Q&A discussion touched on various topics,
 17 including badge formats, mowing regulations, and incorporating "certified pollinator garden"
 18 designations. Brad Will expressed interest in Dryden joining the Pathway. Other possible next steps
 19 include exploring model pollinator-friendly language for municipalities to include in documents like
 20 comprehensive plans.

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22 **Executive Committee Report** – Cait asked members to reflect on the EMC’s work in 2023 and to start
 23 thinking about activities for 2024. Using guiding questions, she encouraged members to identify the past
 24 year's highlights, existing community engagement opportunities, and desired areas for increased Council

25 involvement. Specific examples were given, such as reaching out to high schools, presenting to the
26 County Legislature, and participating in community events. She also encouraged ideas for in-person
27 social gatherings (potlucks, hikes, fieldtrips) and presentations on topics like water protection plans and
28 open space inventories. She will email a form for further input before January's organizational meeting.

29 **Election of 2024 Vice Chairs – Nominating Committee**

30 Steve Nicholson, on behalf of the Nominating Committee, presented the 2024 vice chair slate (Steve
31 Nicholson, Susan Riley, Peter Penniman). Nominations were solicited from the floor, but none were
32 offered.

33 **Action:** Steve Nicholson made a motion, which Regi Teasley seconded, to elect Steve Nicholson, Susan
34 Riley, and Peter Penniman the 2024 vice chairs of the Tompkins County Environmental Management
35 Council. Motion carried.

36 The 2024 chair will be elected at the January meeting. Everyone thanked outgoing officer and member
37 Regi Teasley for her service to the EMC.

38 **Municipal Update: Town of Lansing** – David Wolfe

39 David delivered a presentation on the Town of Lansing, covering its history, natural environment, and
40 current challenges and successes. Key points included the introduction of dairy farming in the mid-19th
41 century, followed by an overview of the town's diverse industrial past and present, marked by salt
42 mining, cement production, and a coal-fired power station. His talk also highlighted the town's natural
43 landscape, which features 10 miles of lakeshore, diverse habitats including forests, hills, creeks, gorges,
44 and waterfalls, and multiple unique natural areas. While Lansing faces its share of current
45 environmental challenges, such as harmful algal blooms and the ongoing impact of salt mining, David
46 also highlighted the valiant efforts of local community groups to monitor water quality, protect open
47 space, and promote sustainable practices among farmers and residents.

48 **Committee Updates** – The Unique Natural Areas Committee reported on consultant Robert Wesley's
49 fieldtrip survey of three UNAs. The full survey results will be presented to the community sometime
50 within the next year. The Climate Adaptation Committee emphasized the ongoing need for their work,
51 particularly on flooding issues. Possible next steps include finalizing a concise summary of the
52 committee's presentation on flooding and excessive heat for wider distribution. Concerns were raised
53 about the lack of public and official awareness regarding climate change urgency and its evolving nature.
54 The committee acknowledged the value of existing presentation materials and highlighted the
55 importance of sharing them with a broader audience.

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57 **Legislative Update (as needed) – Anne Koreman**

58 Annie reported that the updated County Green Building Policy successfully passed through the Facilities
59 and Infrastructure Committee. It will next be reviewed by the Government Operations Committee and
60 subsequently presented to the full County Legislature. Advisory board members were encouraged to
61 review the policy and consider offering their support. Further discussion revealed that this green
62 building policy differs from those previously adopted by the City and Town of Ithaca. Unlike its
63 counterparts, this policy focuses solely on County-owned buildings due to the lack of land-use authority.
64 Notably, the policy incorporates bird-friendly building design principles following a presentation on the
65 topic at a meeting of the Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality Committee.

66 **Municipal Reports (as needed)** –Ingrid shared that at a recent Town of Ithaca Conservation Board
67 meeting a member alerted the board to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's upcoming
68 review of the state's open space conservation plan. This review will include a public comment period,
69 offering an opportunity to recommend specific land parcels for state purchase and protection. Notably,
70 funds are available from the 2022 New York State Bond Act. Members discussed the UNA Committee
71 looking into this opportunity further.

72 **Staff Report (as needed)** – *Darby Kiley*

73 Darby relayed that the Water Resources Council (WRC) has published an updated version of the Clean
74 Boating Map, which is geared primarily toward power boaters and includes relevant information, such
75 as pump-out locations around the lake. Three thousand print copies were produced and will be
76 distributed to marinas and other locations throughout the year. Likewise, an updated digital version will
77 be posted to the WRC's website. She also reported that the EMC's 2024 budget request of \$900 was
78 approved by the County Legislature. Funding will be used to support work of the Unique Natural Areas
79 Committee and for education and outreach materials and activities.

80 **Member Announcements** – Cait presented to the NYSACC board a couple of weeks ago on the annual
81 conference. Her talk touched on highlights from the conference, provided ideas for moving forward, and
82 shared her suggestions with the board. The board members seemed receptive to her ideas, which were
83 echoed by others who had organized the annual conference in the past. The NYSACC board is now
84 considering a few locations for the 2024 or 2025 conference.

85 **Adjournment** – Chair Cait Darfler adjourned the meeting at 5:20pm.