

## **Minutes of the EMC General Meeting February 9, 2011**

**Voting Members Present (12):** Eric Banford, Spring Buck, Brian Eden, Martha Ferger, Katie Kelly, Dan Lamb, Jim McGarry, Steve Nicholson, Kristine Shaw, David Slottje, Gary Stewart, Lucia Tyler

**Voting Members Excused (1):** Clement Chow

**Voting Members Absent (3):** Sarah Adams, Kenny Christianson, Roger Yonkin

**Non-Voting Members Present (3):** Karen Edelstein, Peter Harriott, Dooley Kiefer

**Guests Present:** Kat McCarthy, Stephanie Egan

**Staff Present:** Scott Doyle, Kathy Wilsea

**Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order by Chair Steve Nicholson at 7:05 p.m.

**Privilege of the Floor** – There were no visitors who wished to speak under Privilege of the Floor.

**Changes to the Agenda and Approval of Minutes** – There were no changes to the agenda. The draft minutes of January 12, 2011 were accepted without change. Final minutes are available on the EMC webpage: [www.tompkins-co.org/emc](http://www.tompkins-co.org/emc).

**Changes Afoot at Solid Waste** – Guests from Tompkins County Solid Waste Division were Kat McCarthy, who does recycling education, and Stephanie Egan, who does communications and coordinates events. They previewed the changes that will be occurring soon in the County's recycling programs and said it will be helpful to have EMC share information with the public. Currently we have 60% waste diversion, and the goals are 75% by 2015 and 85% by 2030. Reorganizing the Solid Waste drop-off center will enable citizens to easily drop off items that are not part of the curbside program (including compost), and a green purchasing component is also part of the long-term goals. On 2/16 the FCR (Fairfield County Reduction) contract will go into place for single stream recycling, and curbside changes occur on 3/7. All types of material accepted curbside can go into one bin, and these mixed materials will then be sent directly to FCR for sorting at an Ontario County site. Through a public information campaign, they hope for 100% citizen engagement.

In the discussion period, they said they hope to accept flowerpots in the future, but pots can currently be sent to the reuse program at Cooperative Extension once a year. Some materials, like styrofoam, will still not be recyclable and will fall into the producer responsibility campaign. They hope producers will just quit using materials that can't be recycled. They are starting the single-stream recycling with the same types of items that are currently accepted in curbside bins, and hope to work on more types next year. They are aware that dangerous materials end up in dumpsters. Solid Waste does offer education programs and consulting for commercial sites, and hazardous items are accepted on the Household Hazardous Waste days. They are working on keeping hazardous items out of the waste stream. The Rebusiness program works with landlords, too, and is willing to provide extra guideline info for buildings with ten or more housing units. The single-stream recycling centers have very expensive capital costs, which is why we are contracting it out. It is a combination of automated and worker sorting, and can even sort glass into colors. Spring Buck will send around a video. Solid Waste will still sell rectangular bins for curbside recycling, and other bins can be used if they are well marked (free stickers are available). Brian Eden recommended offering uniform large bins for sale at cost at Solid Waste, as it would make pickup easier if staff was familiar with the bins. Tompkins County will have added costs for junk that needs to be separated from the recyclables. Many communities are now going single stream, with increased citizen participation and expansion of acceptable materials. Kat and Stephanie didn't see any advantage of continuing to sort types of recycleables for curbside pickup. The percentage of diverted materials is calculated by weight, gathering information from Solid Waste and other facilities that accept both recyclables and garbage. Redeemable bottles go in with recycleables at this time.

**Agreement to Serve as Lead Agency for Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan Action Item: Update the UNA Inventory** – Motion to sign letter of agreement made by David Slottje and seconded by Lucia Tyler. Dooley Kiefer asked

what it would mean to be the lead agency, and Scott Doyle said the group would be agreeing to take it on as a task, and it validates our effort. Passed by unanimous show of hands. Steve Nicholson signed the letter, which will go back to Ed Marx, Commissioner of Planning and Community Sustainability.

**Annual Update on EMC's Review and Comment Procedure** – Dan Lamb said this was a topic of discussion a couple years ago in the Communication and Executive committees. This is to help address our mission and goals and keep meetings from sprawling and lacking focus. During discussion, other members of the Executive Committee reiterated it is something to keep in mind when working on issues for Tompkins County and making good use of the time of our volunteers. This is a guideline, and not every issue will fit.

**Finalize 2011 Committees** – Scott Doyle asked that members break out into committees and agree on chair, meeting dates and key tasks.

**Committee Reports** – Environmental Review: Jim McGarry said they just got a project to review. Unique Natural Areas: Dan Lamb said there was nothing to report besides the action that took place tonight on Comp Plan lead agency. Brian Eden said trees were harvested in a UNA in Cayuga Heights, and that has been a controversial subject in the news. Energy: The committee will hold their first meeting 2/28 and decide on a chair and key tasks then. Brian reported on the presentation on wind energy to the County Legislature's PDEQ committee, saying PDEQ members felt a resolution by the Legislature would be limited. They asked why would they only do one producer agreement when county energy purchases have to be put out for bid. They were supportive of the overall concept. Discussion will occur about establishing criteria other than cost for future contracts. Individually, Brian commented on the NYS Climate Action Plan. Gas Drilling: Martha Ferger said they don't have much going on right now. Karen Edelstein said Pennsylvania's DEP has electronic files of drilling violations since 1998. NYS has no such database, and only provide paper records for examination at the Avon DEC office. She would like to see pressure on DEC to provide electronic records in the future. Digital records would be a way to track by company, location, or timeframe. Communication: Spring Buck said their first task is to work with Solid Waste in education for the single-stream recycling program that kicks off next month.

**Municipal Reports** – Town of Caroline: Steve Nicholson said he has learned through Energy Independent Caroline that NYSEG has offered to allow the town to purchase the streetlights. There are about 65 of these.

**Other Reports** – Legislature Liaison: A liaison has not been established yet for 2011. Chair: Steve passed around a 5 ½ x 8 ½ format annual report from Environment New York, saying he liked their format and suggested we use something similar for EMC. Staff: Scott Doyle announced stream buffer information has been posted on the Planning Department website. Kathy Wilsea said she still needs articles for the annual report, and suggested committee chairs cut their reports from the January minutes and edit them for the written report.

**Member Items** – Katie Kelly reported her employer, Clean New York, got increased NYS funding for 2011. Lucia Tyler reported the Ulysses Town Board received a petition with over 1,000 citizen signatures encouraging a ban on gas drilling. David Slottje said he and his wife, Helen, presented a legal opinion and draft amendment to the zoning ordinance to the Ulysses Town Board last night that would ban gas drilling in the municipality.

**Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

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

Approved by Council on March 9, 2011