

Minutes of the EMC General Meeting March 10, 2010

Voting Members Present (14): Spring Buck, Clement Chow, Kenny Christianson, Martha Ferger, Anthony Guarneri, Katie Kelly, Dan Lamb, Jim McGarry, Steve Nicholson, Roger Segelken, Kristine Shaw, Helen Slottje, Gary Stewart, Lucia Tyler

Voting Members Excused (2): Sarah Adams, Stan Marcus

Voting Members Absent (1): Roger Yonkin

Non-Voting Members Present (1): Peter Harriott

Guests Present: Eric Banford, Peter Bardaglio, Carol Chock, Gay Nicholson, Eric VanEvery

Staff Present: Scott Doyle, Kathy Wilsea

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Chair Roger Segelken at 7:03 p.m.

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

Changes to the Agenda -- The order of committee reports was changed.

Approval of Minutes –The minutes of the January meeting were moved by Gary Stewart, seconded by Spring Buck, and accepted with no changes by a show of hands. Brian Egan was present as a guest, and will be applying for at-large membership. Eric VanEvery was also present as a guest, and has applied for the Town of Lansing seat. Each spoke briefly of his personal history and interest in the environment.

Other Environmental Initiatives in Tompkins County – Guests Gay Nicholson and Peter Bardaglio were introduced by Gary Stewart. Gay Nicholson started by saying Sustainable Tompkins was formed in 2004, and she reviewed the four major programs: *Neighborhood MiniGrants* are awarded to citizens or non-profit organizations to seed projects. The *Marcellus Challenge* is on their website, and is a place where citizens can pledge offsets. The site also has lots of links to resources. Hydrofracturing only postpones energy independence, so the Marcellus Challenge is an opportunity for citizens to learn and act. *Bioneers* is an organization that has existed for about twenty years, and Sustainable Tompkins will be involved through satellite conferences. *Signs of Sustainability* offer recognition of local efforts.

Peter Bardaglio said Tompkins County Climate Protection Initiative started in 2008 based on his experience as Provost at Ithaca College. It is a group of organizations that have entered into pledge commitments, such as the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment and Climate Smart Communities. There were no models at that time to use the President's Pledge in communities, so Second Nature was excited about this when Peter discussed it with them. TCCPI also receives some funding from the Park Foundation. The four Sectors and four Goals/Objectives were in handouts provided. Their current focus is on energy efficient retrofits to reduce emissions and move to clean energy. There has been a lot of discussion about financing options, and Peter said he is impressed by the Tompkins County Planning Department staff, especially the Commissioner, Ed Marx. Performance Systems has organized web tools, which exhibits good private/public partnership.

Katie Kelly asked how EMC can interact with these organizations. Gay said they have a Sustainability Council that meets quarterly to serve as a forum to update one another, and Kristine Shaw is the liaison with EMC. Peter said TCCPI meets the 4th Friday of the month in the morning at the Chamber of Commerce. Meetings are open to all interested parties. Lucia Tyler said the Town of Ulysses has a retrofitting grant, and she pointed out they

are experiencing delays due to finding lead paint in old window frames at project sites. Steve Nicholson said the Energy Committee is trying to learn more about PACE. Scott Doyle briefly described Property Assessment Clean Energy as a program that permits bonding for funding. Owners borrow from the fund to pay for energy efficient improvements, and pay back is through increased property tax. The loan stays with the property if it is sold. Peter pointed out we need to get realtors on board and make this desirable in the market. This is well established in the city of Babylon. Anthony Guarneri said it needs endorsement by a reputable agency and a clear explanation of the return on investment. Dan Lamb asked for more information on the web tools. Peter said it is a dashboard that creates trackable data, so the user can easily see how the property improvements and energy reductions affect their budget and emissions.

Committee Reports – Executive: Roger Segelken reported they met last month. Katie Kelly discussed the flow chart for how EMC can decide what is appropriate use of our time and how we can keep our tasks focused. **Communications:** Spring Buck reviewed the committee actions of 2009. The committee is planning to participate in the Ithaca Festival with something that is interactive and kid-focused. This year’s festival theme is “Singing in the Rain”. Dan Lamb reviewed committee discussion of their vision, drawing a Vin diagram on the board. They intend to work at increasing communications with other agencies and levels of government and then sharing with the County Legislature those things that are germane to the Legislature. Kristine Shaw pointed out the EMC relationship with municipalities is unique, and Roger agreed, saying it works both ways. Carol Chock commented the County is fortunate to have the services and skills of the County Planning Department, and Ed Marx’s dedication to the environment relieves some of the pressure from EMC. **Energy:** Steve Nicholson reported they met and found that their priorities involve getting help from the Communications Committee. They want to publicize information on the Tompkins County Public Library solar panels, which have not reached the anticipated production levels. He challenged members to find solar panel information on the library’s updated website. The library’s interactive kiosk inside the building has been removed, too. The Energy Committee is monitoring the action items, many of which are generic in scope, of the County Comprehensive Plan’s Energy & Greenhouse Gas Emissions element. The County is still a member of ICLEI, and plugging in data from 2008 was the final step in the Local Energy Action Plan. A final report on LEAP will be released soon. The committee would like to publicize the County’s sustainability efforts. Others suggested he check with Marcia Lynch, the County’s Public Information Officer. Steve said Tompkins County Solid Waste division is one of two recognized in a United Nations publication as outstanding examples. People here are not even aware that we are considered innovators. **Environmental Review:** Jim McGarry reported they have not had any development projects to review lately. **Gas Drilling Subcommittee:** Martha Ferger reported the members met in January. A new website (<http://solidshale.wordpress.com>) has been launched, primarily to provide information on pending legislation relating to hydrofracturing and a forum for discussion of same. (This is not an EMC initiative.) **Unique Natural Areas:** Scott Doyle reported he is aware they met, and they have sought information from the Planning Department on the status of funding. Steve Nicholson pointed out there are issues regarding the number of voting members on the committee and who can serve as chair. Kathy Wilsea said the chair is supposed to be a voting member.

Municipal Reports – Town of Caroline: Steve Nicholson reported there was a ribbon cutting in February for the new town hall annex. It is heated by a ground loop geothermal system and will begin to get energy from the solar panels in April. Combined, these will provide 75% of the joint needs of the buildings. The Town has been purchasing 100% of town government power needs from renewable sources since 2005. The Critical Environmental Area committee had Robert Wesley visit. This is a step in the process of creating CEAs. Designation of the entire Sixmile Creek watershed as a CEA is a possibility, with the towns of Caroline and Ithaca working with the City of Ithaca. Tatem Engineering recommends \$60,000 in retrofits for the town barns. By devoting 20% of the funding, the Town can guarantee NYSERDA funding for the project. Forty people recently attended a meeting of the Natural Gas Coalition at town hall. The Watersheds Committee is working with a pipeline company on a remediation project for pipeline along Sixmile Creek that has become exposed by erosion. Caroline passed a law that will allow ticketing of overweight trucks on Town roads. **Cayuga Heights:** Roger Segelken reported that the Village had a moratorium on accepting gas drilling flowback water at the wastewater treatment plant. Treating the flowback was a moneymaking situation. A headworks analysis was begun, but the Village decided not to proceed to the final analysis. They will never again accept any drilling

fluids. Ulysses: Lucia Tyler reported the Town formally adopted Unique Natural Areas, which gives them consideration in the development review process. Ulysses also adopted a local law banning leasing of Town land for gas drilling. A conservation zone is being planned along the lakeshore. Board Member Ken Zeserson has formed the Marcellus Shale Task Force. One board member who attended meetings on the Marcellus Shale thought other counties are better organized. Lucia wondered what steps can be taken to provide better coordination. Eric Banford said Danby has a gas drilling task force. Helen Slottje said a toolbox/playbook is being developed for public use. Carol Chock said there is room for lots of activity, but there is a need to distinguish between education/activism and what municipalities can do. Don Barber and Tompkins County Council of Governments are active. Each town would have to incorporate a site plan review process and other steps. Each could consider model legislation. It might come down to one being a test case in the courts. Lucia suggested having a website for public donations to a defense fund for a test case.

Reports – Legislature Liaison: Carol Chock reported that Peter Stein will serve in this capacity in 2010. Chair: Roger Segelken moved to vacate the Town of Lansing seat based on poor attendance. This was seconded by Gary Stewart and passed unanimously. Roger then exhibited the Golden Hard Hat to prove it has not been relegated to the landfill. And he modeled it. Wow, Rog! Staff: New membership and committee lists were distributed. Kathy Wilsea reminded members of committees that have not submitted articles for the Annual Report that they are due Monday at noon.

Member Items – Peter Harriott announced James Hansen will give two public speeches at Cornell on April 19 and 20. (Dr. Hansen is a climate science researcher, and head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies.) Steve Nicholson said the Town of Enfield is expected to approve John Rancich's wind power project tonight. He also said he has read that the energy required to treat hydrofracturing flowback water wipes out the greenhouse gas emissions saved by use of natural gas.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Secretary
Tompkins County Planning Department

Approved by Council on April 14, 2010