

**Minutes of the EMC General Meeting
April 8, 2009**

Voting Members Present (12): Kenny Christianson, Martha Ferger, Kariann Mackie-Cunningham, Stan Marcus, Michael Miles, Tony Nekut, Amy Risen, Roger Segelken, Jacie Spoon, Gary Stewart, Lucia Tyler, Roger Yonkin

Voting Members Excused (3): Dan Lamb, Jim McGarry, Marissa Weiss

Voting Members Absent (4): Steve Nicholson, Larry Sharpsteen, Joanne Trutko, Mark Whitmore

Non-Voting Members Present (1): Dooley Kiefer

Guests Present: Spring Buck, Fernando de Aragon, Roberta Dixon, Deborah Marcus, Kristine Shaw

Staff Present: Scott Doyle, Kathy Wilsea

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

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

Changes to the Agenda – There were no changes to the agenda. Member applicants Kristine Shaw and Spring Buck were introduced, and spoke briefly about why they are interested in joining EMC.

Transportation Initiatives in Tompkins County – Amy provided a quick outline of our committee structure for our guest. Mike Miles introduced Fernando de Aragon, Executive Director of Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council. Fernando explained that Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) supervise expenditure of federal transportation funds and provide technical assistance and planning functions. MPOs are established in urbanized areas with over 50,000 population. ITCTC was established in 1992 as Tompkins County's MPO, and its seven voting members are Tompkins County, NYS Department of Transportation, City of Ithaca, Town of Ithaca, Town of Dryden, Village of Lansing and Village of Cayuga Heights. Non-voting members are TCAT, Cornell, Federal Transit Administration, Federal Highway Administration and other county municipalities. ITCTC consists of staff, a planning committee and a policy committee (the final decision-making body).

ITCTC is charged with creating a 20-year Long Range Transportation Plan, with updates every five years. The update procedure is currently underway to create the 2030 LRTP, for 2010 to 2030. The LRTP includes the Transportation Improvement Program, transit, highway/bridges, safety/mobility, Unified Public Work Program, technical assistance operations, and studies.

Fernando provided some interesting data:

- 30% of greenhouse gases in the US are from mobile sources, with only electricity production being higher;
- freight growth is anticipated to be 70% by 2020;
- 87% of trips involve private vehicles;
- private vehicles equal 55% of household carbon footprint;
- the transport sector uses over 50% of global oil demand;
- the transport section uses over 66% of US oil demand; and
- US population growth is anticipated to be 300 million to 420 million by 2050.

He also provided some interesting concepts: in order for transportation greenhouse gases to be reduced,

- vehicles will need to run cleaner, be more fuel efficient;

- fuels will need to be cleaner, and non-fossil fuels will need to be implemented;
- there will need to be less driving;
- we will need to develop/deploy carbon-neutral vehicle technology worldwide;
- we will need to adopt pricing measures to reward conservation and technical innovations;
- we will need to maximize energy efficiency of current vehicles; and
- we will need to push “eco driving” and system/operational management (note these actions can be done locally) through:
 - adopting more efficient landuse policies,
 - supporting and rewarding carpools and carsharing, and
 - increase biking, walking, transit and telecommuting.

In Tompkins County, we have an impressive pedestrian network, trails planned countywide, and many opportunities for bikers. Fernando reviewed the expanding options for transit, CarShare, vanpool, ride sharing, Way2Go and other partnerships. Future directions include continuing metropolitan planning, meeting infrastructure maintenance needs, strengthening transit, building multi-modal transportation, continuing community partnerships, and addressing community concerns with climate change and energy issues in all planning activities.

In a discussion period, Fernando said the MPO wants to have a variety of options for citizens to select from in rural areas, including bikes, vanpool, on-demand transit, park and ride, and trails. Trails are for bikes and pedestrians, insured like parks. Right of way for trails can be donated easements or purchased rights. Sometimes taxis are used by Social Services, and Gadabout is getting a grant for a wheelchair-accessible car. Roger Segelken pointed out Craig’s List already has a bulletin board for ride sharing. Mike Miles asked about regional transit coverage, and Fernando said there is park and ride to some areas, and they are trying to expand. He only heard of jitney/taxi service to bus stops one time.

Ability in 2010 to Alter Your Vehicle to Obtain 150 to 300 mpg and No Need for Gas Stations – Roger Yonkin said in 1957, as an engineering student, he developed plans for converting gas-powered vehicles to electric, but gas was so cheap it wasn’t supported. He also developed plans for a compressed air-powered vehicle. Next year a compressed air vehicle should be on the road, but he has not seen much publicity yet. No matter what we develop, fueling or recharge stations are needed. Compressed air will probably be available at gas stations, and provide 150 miles per “fillup”. If a heating system is developed for the air, could get up to 300 miles per “fillup”. He expects conversions kits will come onto the market. Neha Khanna said there are some vehicles in New Delhi, India running on compressed air.

Finalizing Plans for Earth Day – Roberta Dixon said the Earth Day celebration will be held at the Farmers Market on Sunday, 4/26 from noon to 5 PM. A signup sheet for helpers was passed around. A Party for the Planet will be held Friday night. The reuse fashion show will be Sunday at 2 PM. All committees will provide some type of display or handout, except Environmental Review, which will be in the committee descriptions.

Approval of Minutes -- The minutes of March 11, 2009 were accepted by vote of 10-1 of members present, with several changes. Final minutes are available on the EMC webpage: www.tompkins-co.org/emc.

Municipal Reports – Village of Cayuga Heights: Roger Segelken reported the Village has placed a moratorium on treatment of gas drilling fluids from vertical drilling by the wastewater treatment facility while studies are conducted as to appropriateness. That treatment was a source of income for the Village. The upgrade project for the wastewater treatment plant is on schedule. The Deer Remediation Advisory Committee had two public comment sessions, and information was placed in the mail folder. The Village is contacting other local government fleet operators about establishing a compressed natural gas fueling facility. The Village wants to buy natural-gas vehicles as its fleet is replaced. Town of Enfield: Mike Miles noted that the town board meets on the same dates as EMC. He is working on transportation issues for the Town, like park and ride, who is responsible for shelters, and who establishes parking lots.

Committee Reports – Amy distributed a schedule for committee chairs and liaisons to report at EMC meetings. Gas Drilling: Amy reported they have placed some information on the EMC website, with resource links. The examples

of road laws in Sullivan County are web-linked. She attended the Water Resources Council's gas drilling committee meeting, and Liz Cameron, chair of the WRC committee, has attended a meeting of the EMC subcommittee. There was discussion on whether or not the EMC group, which is a subcommittee of Environmental Review Committee, should be a separate committee. Roger Yonkin moved to retain it as a subcommittee. Kenny Christianson pointed out it was not necessary to vote to have it remain unchanged. Motion was not seconded. Energy: Tony Nekut said his project is biofuel. The Danby biofuel project has applied for a grant from the Park Foundation. They are also checking on another funding resource. He has arranged for a biofuel speaker to visit EMC in the fall. On 4/28 the Energy Committee will meet at the Planning Department with Tompkins County Director of Facilities, who will provide updates on energy use in County buildings.

Chair's Report – Amy Risen reported that the Executive Committee acted to purchase A Sense of Wonder, a DVD film about Rachel Carson. Showings will be arranged for EMC and the public. There was discussion on dates, which will be finalized with the Library for the public shows and by email for the member preview. She announced the resignation of Neha Khanna. Neha was present, and encouraged EMC members who receive a National Household Travel Survey to respond to the questionnaire completely. Neha also mentioned that Eban Goodstein, who is becoming the Director for Environmental Policy at the Bard Center, and will be speaking in Binghamton in the fall.

Staff Report – Scott Doyle reported that American Farmland Trust is doing a presentation at Cooperative Extension on 5/7 on agriculture and energy issues, and protection tools. It can qualify attendees for planning board training credits.

Legislature Liaison's Report – Carol Chock was excused.

Member Items – Roger Segelken announced a cleanup for our Adopt-A-Highway route on the second Saturday in June, from 10 AM to noon. Dooley Kiefer shared information on a road rally in Watkins Glen with an exposition of green vehicles. She will send more info by email. She also said the County Legislature is partnering with BOCES on a bid for biodiesel fuel.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wilsea, Secretary
Tompkins County Planning Department

Approved by Council on May 13, 2009