

Minutes of the EMC General Meeting July 13, 2011

Voting Members Present (10): Eric Banford, Spring Buck, Kenny Christianson, Brian Eden, Martha Ferger, Katie Kelly, Dan Lamb, Steve Nicholson, David Slottje, Lucia Tyler

Voting Members Excused (5): Sarah Adams, Jim McGarry, Kristine Shaw, Gary Stewart, Roger Yonkin

Non-Voting Members Present: Peter Harriott (Associate), Dooley Kiefer (Associate)

Staff Present: Scott Doyle, Kathy Wilsea

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Chair Steve Nicholson at 7:04 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 – Discussion on joining the NYS BEAM campaign was added under Member Items. Deer population was added under Other Reports. The minutes of June 8, 2011 were accepted without change. Final minutes are available on the EMC webpage: www.tompkins-co.org/emc.

Reorganization of EMC – *Resolution: Requesting Reorganization of Membership Seats on the Environmental Management Council* was moved by Dan Lamb and seconded by Spring Buck. There are currently five municipalities with CACs/CBs that would have seats under this plan. Steve Nicholson reviewed the history of municipal vacancies, some of which are chronic and some are periodic. Dan said this proposed membership configuration is aimed at taking EMC back to its core responsibility to the County Legislature. There were suggestions to increase wordage about EMC goals of preservation and conservation and finding applicants with like commitment. Concerning the seats for legislature districts, EMC Executive Committee still wants to interview the applicants. Scott Doyle said there is a need to frame the request as a step in fulfilling EMC goals by increasing participations. Most municipalities don't think of EMC as a path to the Legislature. He pointed out the resolution needs to specify a backup system for appointments to vacant seats. He suggested establishing an aggressive timeline for obtaining applicants for district seats, so Exec has an opportunity to make suggestions to fill any vacancies through a backup system. Lucia pointed out the pitfalls of having appointments made right before a legislative term ends, when new legislators might be coming into office. Dan said selection of stakeholder organizations will be at the discretion of the Executive Committee. There was discussion on how the executive committees of various groups function, and whether or not EMC Exec met with the people who volunteered last month to be part of the discussion on this reorganization topic.

Dan said the Executive Committee spent a lot of time trying to find a way to move into the future. This format has more County focus and Dan got supportive comments from Legislators he spoke with about the concept. Several EMC members said they still see need for polishing the resolution up and presenting it again. Lucia Tyler moved to table the resolution so Exec and the other volunteers can discuss it further, which was seconded by Martha Ferger. Since it was only circulated by email today, several members sought more time to study the resolution. Vote on motion to table: 6 yes, 3 no. Steve Nicholson said EMC typically does not meet in August, so the August 10th meeting date will be used for Exec and volunteers to work further on this resolution. Location to be determined.

Establish New Meeting Schedule – Following up on the Doodle poll and discussion at the June meeting, meeting the second Thursday of the month from 4 to 6 PM was good for ten people who responded. Dooley Kiefer and David Slottje said that time is not good for them. Another Doodle poll will be conducted and a new date and time will be established by the Chair. Per EMC Bylaws, this is a duty of the Chair.

UNA Amendment Protocol – Dan Lamb reported the committee has been meeting regularly. Final draft and tracked changes versions of this protocol were circulated by email prior to the meeting. The biggest changes are in the notification

process for landowners and municipalities. Committee members felt either a site is unique or it is not, and that is not up to the landowner. The notification process in the 2007 protocol solves a problem that doesn't exist, and is expensive. The committee is trying to streamline the process, and scientists are making the determinations about additions, deletions, and boundary amendments. Some members stressed the need to respect property owners' rights, and David speculated amendments could impact DEC regulations of wetlands. Brian said the 2000 update had few responses (negative or positive) to the thousands of letters that were mailed. Lucia said her municipality's planning board uses UNAs in the SEQR process. Dan said the committee had much discussion on the purpose of notification, and this amendment would allow the committee to function and move forward with the update of the inventory. Changes to the UNA Amendment Protocol moved by Katie Kelly, seconded by Kenny Christianson. Vote 7 yes, 2 no.

ERC Comments on Cayuga Inlet Dredging – Brian Eden explained the Environmental Review Committee drafted these comments on dredging. Scott said this is a great idea, and is an action item in the County Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Department staff feels this was fully vetted in the City process earlier, but DEC continued to oppose such use of dredge spoils. Steve said ERC has commented on dredging in the past, too. Brian moved to send the letter from the full council rather than from ERC. Seconded by Dan Lamb. Brian provided historical maps that show how the marshes were filled and developed. He noted undeveloped marshes still exist south of Watkins Glen and Seneca Lake. Vote: 9 yes, 0 no.

Municipal Reports – Village of Dryden: Martha Feger reported one of the TCCOG mapping meetings was held in Dryden. Visualization of all the aspects of gas drilling had a big impact on the audience. Martha continues to learn more about waste treatment since the new treatment plant opened in the village. Town of Ulysses: Lucia Tyler reported a public meeting was held on the proposed zoning amendment to ban gas drilling. The Town also hosted one of the TCCOG mapping meetings.

Reports – Staff: Scott reported the Park Foundation will not fund the downtown sustainability center that was a topic at the April EMC meeting. The Planning Department will devote some staff hours to the concept for six months. Kathy Wilsea reported she is working to clean up the storage space at TCPD and all EMC minutes will be scanned and saved in a permanent digital format. She noted she found mention in early minutes of Inlet dredging, so it has been an EMC topic for 40 years.

Other: Brian Eden said the Energy Committee received correspondence from the Public Service Commission asking EMC to be part of BEAM and serve as a clearing house for information on energy programs. He moved that EMC join, and it was agreed by consensus to do so.

Brian also voiced interest in participating on a regional basis in discussions on control of the deer population. He feels this would match EMC mission because of the biodiversity aspect. The NYS plan comment period ends July 31, so it is unrealistic to try to comment. But Cayuga Heights, the Village of Lansing, and Cornell University all have concerns. The deer population has increased 100 fold since the 1930s. He has had conversations with many who share his concern. Steve said it doesn't fit our current committee structure, but it was agreed a committee could be formed if 2 voting members choose to do that and/or a presentation could be planned for early 2012. Brian will also discuss with TCCOG. Dooley mentioned that changes to hunting regulations could be a way to impact the deer population.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

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

Approved by Council on September 14, 2011