

Minutes of the EMC General Meeting October 12, 2011

Voting Members Present (9): Eric Banford, Spring Buck, Brian Eden, Martha Ferger, Dan Lamb, Jim McGarry, Steve Nicholson, Kristine Shaw, Lucia Tyler

Voting Members Excused (2): Katie Kelly, Gary Stewart

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

Non-Voting Members Present: Peter Harriott

Staff Present: Scott Doyle (Coordinator), Kathy Wilsea

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Chair Steve Nicholson at 7:10 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 minutes of September 14, 2011 were accepted with one spelling correction. Final minutes are available on the EMC webpage: www.tompkins-co.org/emc.

Learn How to *Get Your GreenBack-Tompkins* – Steve Nicholson said Tompkins County is ready to launch this campaign to households in Tompkins County. He lives off the grid and likes to get people interested in energy efficiency. Caroline did a handout of compact fluorescent lightbulbs a few years ago, then Lighten Up Tompkins distributed CFLs to many other households. Brian Eden recently attended the GreenBack meeting, and he pointed out they have a goal of including businesses, churches, and other organizations that are not necessarily “households”. Coordinated through Cornell Cooperative Extension, the program is promoting energy efficiency as a cost saver. The goal is to inspire each Tompkins County household to take one energy-saving step each month for a year. Volunteers from the Into The Streets program will be doing handouts on 10/29 of bags, information (resource guide, NYSERDA literature, info from various local groups), and bulbs. Brian is seeing new volunteers in this effort. More bags will be distributed in January, and Eric Banford is writing a preview article for Tompkins Weekly. Volunteers are still welcome for preparing bags.

Report on Membership Restructuring Discussion at PDEQ – Steve reported he, Dan Lamb, and Brian were present for the PDEQ discussion. They felt the EMC proposal was well received. PDEQ members recognized our effort to increase membership and interact with the Legislature. Pam Mackesey, PDEQ Chair, will work with Dan to draft a resolution suitable for the Legislature.

Committee Reports – Environmental Review: Jim McGarry said they have had no specific projects to review in the last couple months. Unique Natural Areas: Dan reported the committee members have been interacting a lot by email. Contracts are now in place for consultants to work on boundary updates of 38 UNAs. The Planning Dept. is requesting \$5,000 funding in 2012, outside their regular budget, and response from Legislators seems to be positive. He wrote a letter in support of 2012 funding, which was passed around. Energy: Brian extended kudos to the Planning Department for picking up on the application process for NYSERDA Cleaner Greener Communities. A municipality is required to submit the application for the region, and Ed Marx was willing to devote staff time to this coordination and application. Gas Drilling: Martha Ferger reported they met today. They only have three members, and she invites others to participate. They will bring draft comments to the November EMC meeting and decisions will be made then about how the full Council can sign off on comments to DEC. Brian has been looking at waste treatment and will interact with IAWWTP, and learning about underground injection and will contact Bill Kappel at USGS on that topic.

Another informational meeting for the public will be held Saturday, but Martha expects that to be devoted to social and economic sections of the dsGEIS. Communication: Spring reported they did not meet this month. Executive: Steve said they will be meeting to work on the restructuring resolution for the County Legislature. Jim asked if we still plan to change the meeting time, and there was discussion about whether it was better to make that decision before trying to recruit new members, so applicants can know before they sign up. Steve will send another Doodle Poll and Kathy Wilsea will follow up to make sure all members participate.

Municipal Reports – Town of Ithaca: Kristine Shaw reported the CAC met last week with Darby Kiley on gas drilling. The CAC is drafting comments to DEC, and they are willing to share with EMC prior to the next EMC meeting. They devoted some time to focusing on the notification section and how municipalities will learn about permits issued for sites in their muni. They also are concerned about invasive species, and are using their scenic resources inventory as a reference as they prepare their comments. Kristine said they are examining how water conservation in the Town could have a positive impact on greenhouse gases, since much of their emissions come from Bolton Point operations and pumping of treated water uphill within the Town. They are also examining a fee structure that would encourage reduction of water consumption. Brian said drinking water-related GHG issues of the City and Town might give the two municipalities a topic for discussion and cooperation. Steve pointed out that leak repairs also would be an effective energy saver, since typically 30% of treated water is lost from faulty pipelines.

Town of Ulysses: Lucia Tyler reported mostly they are involved with budget talks right now. They have a public hearing scheduled for some zoning changes: a Lakeshore zone (east side of Rt 89) and a Conservation zone (west side of Rt 89). They are working on comments to DEC concerning wastewater from hydrofracing. They consider the lawsuit against the Town of Dryden concerning zoning that bars hydrofracing to be a test case, and know it may impact their similar law.

Village of Dryden: Martha Feger reported their new wastewater treatment plant operated well during the heavy rainfalls of recent storms. Concerning the lawsuit against the Town, Kristine explained the steps of the court challenge: Tompkins County Supreme Court, which rules concerning our County; Appellate Court which would confirm or deny a ruling concerning our County; and NYS Supreme Court, which would establish whether or not the Appellate Court ruling applies to the entire state. Steve said Pennsylvania is debating whether or not natural gas is a mineral, and how far it can be distributed, since it can be a source of radon.

Reports – Legislature Liaison: Chair: Steve mentioned the Town of Caroline voted 2-2 on a proposed gas drilling ban. The two Town Board members who support hydrofracing are facing opponents in this fall's election. Both of the new candidates oppose hydrofracing. Staff: Scott Doyle reported TCCOG applied for a grant to obtain invasive species identification training for highway workers. The grant application was successful, and Scott is coordinating that training for 10/26 by a staff member from the NY Forest Service. As a spin-off from the establishment of the Sustainability Center, the Planning Department piloted a program for sustainability internships. A wide range of agencies have responded, and lots of students are volunteering. Topics include farms, streams, Sustainability Center design and management.

Member Items – Brian Eden pointed out he wrote an Ithaca Journal guest viewpoint on hydrilla in Cayuga Inlet. He still has more concerns to discuss at EMC and with Holly Menninger. Peter Harriott commented that he sees lights on all the time at Cornell. He feels sensors would help reduce this waste of energy. Spring will contact student organizations.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Secretary
Tompkins County Planning Department

Approved by Council on December 14, 2011