

Minutes of the EMC General Meeting November 10, 2010

Voting Members Present (#): Sarah Adams, Eric Banford, Spring Buck, Clement Chow, Brian Eden, Martha Ferger, Anthony Guarneri, Katie Kelly, Dan Lamb, Stan Marcus, Jim McGarry, Roger Segelken, Kristine Shaw, Helen Slottje

Voting Members Excused (#): Gary Stewart, Roger Yonkin

Voting Members Absent (#): Kenny Christianson, Steve Nicholson, Lucia Tyler

Non-Voting Members Present (#): Karen Edelstein, Peter Harriott, Dooley Kiefer, Peter Stein

Guests Present: Andrew Obernesser, Matt Sypas, Will Dorr

Staff Present: Scott Doyle, Kathy Wilsea

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Chair Roger Segelken at 7:02 p.m.

Privilege of the Floor – There were several visitors, who introduced themselves.

Changes to the Agenda – There were no changes to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes -- Recommendation for amendment was received by Kathy Wilsea from Eric Banford via email prior to the meeting. The minutes of October 13, 2010 were amended in line 4 of the Enfield Energy Update to read “They plan 20 turbines, each of 2.5 MW capacity, on a series of hilltops. The wind farm will provide enough power for 18,800 homes over the course of one year.” Amended minutes were moved by Spring Buck, seconded by Brian Eden and approved by unanimous show of hands. Final minutes are available on the EMC webpage: www.tompkins-co.org/emc.

EMC Goals for 2011 – Scott Doyle, EMC Coordinator, was present to facilitate discussion. Last year, EMC examined the history of the organization and planned for 2010, and during that discussion there were many comments about hoping to make EMC be more effective. Scott said one way would be to use our meeting time more effectively. Scott noted attendance has been good this year, and if members are absent they usually ask to be excused. We tried to shorten speaker time and get regular committee reports. Spring Buck said she likes receiving committee reports prior to the meetings, and Jim McGarry commented that guests are better focused when the time is limited.

Scott asked for ideas for other changes, and noted he likes the meeting facility on Pine Tree Road. Kristine Shaw felt that limiting the number of committees prevented small groups, and she sees good participation now. Jim said Environmental Review doesn't have the look or feel of a committee, as right now there are only two functioning members and the workflow is never steady. Sarah Adams, who also serves on ERC, said addressing development projects needs wider background and expertise, and this is clearly a place to be effective in the community. Katie Kelly would like a clearer schedule of committee meetings, and Peter Stein concurred, saying they can be posted on the calendar maintained by the Clerk of the Legislature. Brian Eden said Energy meets consistently and has good attendance. Anthony Guarneri said the large number of members on Energy helps them address their chosen tasks. Scott commented that UNA also struggles with numbers, and Karen Edelstein said they have three consistent contributors. Scott said members need to be responsible and participate. He wondered if going to even a lower number of committees would “inject” participation. UNA and ERC are priorities for focus.

According to Scott, another key piece for EMC's future is firming up government relationships – EMC/County Legislature/ local governments. Martha Ferger said the Legislature chair is very active on gas drilling, and it is difficult for EMC to interact. The Legislature recently passed a resolution suggesting a ban on hydrofracturing in State Forests, and EMC had no input. Brian Eden concurred that the legislators must be getting information from other sources, as they acted on three topics recently where EMC could have contributed. Karen asked if anyone from EMC was supposed to provide comments at Legislature budget meetings on the need for funding for UNA updates, and pointed out that is not our level of expertise. Katie said a gap does exist, and isn't it the liaison's role to communicate? Carol Chock occasionally mentioned

opportunities for EMC input during committee work or the privilege of the floor period at Legislature meetings. Dooley Kiefer said an example of EMC leadership was our role in adoption of the Neighbor Notification Law (for pesticides). Right now the Legislature is considering banning hydrofracturing on county-owned lands, and EMC could weigh in on that. Dan Lamb asked if EMC can weigh in on things the Legislature is not working on, and the answer is yes. Peter Stein said that is a good way for EMC to contribute. Gas drilling may be well in hand, but there are many other topics to address, and he is willing to interact between EMC and TCLEg. Scott said we will work on ways to keep groups better informed, and went on to say EMC has not produced a State of the Environment report in many years, and that is a document that provides some history and alerts on current and upcoming issues.

Scott then asked what members felt about our current vacancy rate among municipal seats. Half of our municipal seats are vacant. Kristine said her municipal seat is a big commitment for her because she serves on EMC and the Town of Ithaca Conservation Board, and each requires her to serve on a committee. Scott reminded members that our structure with one seat dedicated to each municipality is unique. Brian suggested sending a member to a board meeting in each municipality that has a vacant seat. Kathy Wilsea corresponds a couple times each year with municipalities, but that doesn't yield good results. Scott also asked if our liaison structure is beneficial. Brian suggested we re-examine the list, and add the Climate Protection Initiative, the Energy Efficiency Campaign (Cooperative Extension), and be active concerning the dredging of Cayuga Inlet because it is a big project that will be coming up for environmental review. Scott said we will work on some more committee and liaison planning in December. Sarah asked if there is a master list of environmental organizations in our region, and was referred to Green Resource Hub and Sustainable Tompkins.

Presentation and Discussion of Draft Wind Resolution – “EMC Resolution No xx-2010 Recommending That Tompkins County and Municipalities Sign Letter of Intent to Purchase Wind Power From Enfield Energy Wind Project” was moved by Eric Banford and seconded by Spring Buck. If adopted, it will be presented to PDEQ for the County Legislature, and copied to municipalities. This is not a financial agreement yet, but shows support, which is why the term non-binding is used. Concerning language in Resolved clause “b”, this is one concrete thing that can be done to meet the County’s 2020 Energy Strategy’s recommendation on renewable energies and shows interest in having a local producer. Energy committee members feel we need to engage the Planning Department and the Legislature about what renewables can be used locally. If wind power is cheaper, it will have support in the marketplace. We need to weigh the value of having a local business in renewable energy. Brian said fossil fuel subsidies are written into tax codes, but renewables are part of the stimulus bill that expires at the end of the year. This EMC resolution does not release Enfield Energy from the environmental review process. Dan Lamb felt the resolution was of limited scope, and called the question, which was seconded by Clement Chow and passed unanimously. Dooley Kiefer suggested changing “maximize” to “encourage” in the first paragraph, which was accepted as a friendly amendment. Resolution passed by unanimous show of hands. It will be presented to the Legislature’s PDEQ Committee on Dec. 1.

Committee Reports – Energy: Brian Eden said he is looking for information on tax exemptions for renewable energy. Energy meets regularly on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 5 PM in the basement of the Planning Department.

Environmental Review: Jim McGarry reported the Collegetown Terrace project has incorporated design changes for the facades bordering on State Street. This has passed in the City’s Planning & Development Board, but not Board of Zoning Appeals or Common Council yet. ERC raised issues of proximity to a UNA and increased traffic. UNA: Karen Edelstein reported they are getting organized to submit a revised proposal to the Planning Department. This would include work with the 20% highest rated UNAs for revisions, and boundary adjustments.

Reports – Legislature Liaison: Peter Stein reported they passed a draft 2011 budget. The Capital Reserve Fund request from the Planning Department is not fully funded in the current draft budget. Kathy Wilsea will send information by email on the fund. Chair: Roger Segelken sought more volunteers for the highway cleanup to take place on Saturday, 11/13. Staff: Scott Doyle announced there is a baler for agriculture plastics now in Tompkins County. The mail folder contains information on SEQR Basics training to take place at TC3 next month. If members sign up and notify Scott BEFORE the meeting, they can get the fee reimbursed. The Town of Ithaca stream setbacks refer to 1998 invasive species list provided by EMC. Todd Bittner and Robert Wesley of Cornell Plantations have developed an updated list. Scott gave the draft to the UNA committee to preview and discuss. Kathy Wilsea said she will send email to members who still need to apply for reappointment to their EMC seats.

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

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

Approved by Council on December 8, 2010