

Minutes of the EMC General Meeting December 9, 2009

Voting Members Present (10): Spring Buck, Martha Ferger, Dan Lamb, Katie Kelly, Jim McGarry, Steve Nicholson, Roger Segelken, Kristine Shaw, Lucia Tyler, Mark Whitmore

Voting Members Excused (8): Kenny Christianson, Roberta Dixon, Stan Marcus, Amy Risen, Larry Sharpsteen, Gary Stewart, Andrea Turner, Roger Yonkin

Voting Members Absent (1): Tony Nekut

Non-Voting Members Present (1): Carol Chock

Guests Present: Clement Chow, Karen Edelstein, Anthony Guarneri

Staff Present: Scott Doyle, Kathy Wilsea

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Mark Whitmore at 7:12 p.m.

Privilege of the Floor – Guests were welcomed. Lucia Tyler announced the Town of Ulysses passed a four-page resolution last night that provides comments to DEC on the dsGEIS on gas drilling. Roger Segelken announced that Dooley Kiefer is unable to attend tonight.

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

Restructuring EMC, Part III – Goals and Committees for 2010 – Scott Doyle said previous discussion has brought us to two ideas for discussion tonight: meeting structure and committees. Members have already talked about reducing the time allotted for guest speakers, having guests connect directly to committee work, and having committee reports at all meetings. If a speaker has broader appeal, a meeting could be announced to the public.

Committees have been organized based on goals and discussion at the annual organization meeting in January. Scott offered up the converse idea – having a few standing committees and some ad hoc subcommittees. He mentioned the gas drilling subcommittee of ERC as an example. He sees the main committees as ERC and Energy. There was discussion on the work of the Energy Committee, and Scott mentioned the Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions element of the County Comprehensive Plan will bring more activity to the Energy Committee. Steve Nicholson said the committee is working on a celebration of countywide accomplishments, such as the effectiveness of the Johnson Controls project to increase energy efficiency in County facilities, the Library solar panels approaching production of 1 million kilowatt hours, and efforts for changes to the County vehicle fleet. Scott said other large committees would be UNA and Executive. Discussion followed with support for fewer committees, and reiteration of the need for active members, role sharing, and interaction with the County Legislature. Scott acknowledged a goal for 2010 should be proactive interacting with the Legislature's PDEQ committee. Carol Chock pointed out that portions of the resolution drafted from the Legislature to DEC on the dsGEIS on gas drilling reflect the work of EMC. Lucia Tyler said she sees the work of TC Council of Governments overlapping with EMC on gas drilling. Better communication would reduce duplication of efforts. Scott said municipalities are currently underrepresented on EMC, and perhaps EMC should do a presentation to TCCOG and individual municipalities on our vacancies. Dan Lamb mentioned burn barrels as an example of good interaction with TC Leg. Steve Nicholson offered to speak with Don Barber, Caroline Supervisor and current chair of TCCOG, about EMC visiting TCCOG. There were further comments about the need for municipal participation on EMC and interaction with County government. Jim McGarry agreed a greater level of interaction is needed and said, as chair of ERC, he wonders if and how their comments on development projects get used.

Scott acknowledged these are good ideas for next year. He moved on to the last piece of how committees can have role-sharing among members for chair/vice chair/secretary. He suggested setting up meeting dates and times before signups. Martha said this is the flip side of having committees of people who share an interest and can find an agreeable meeting time. Mark Whitmore stressed that members need to be prepared for committee signups in January, and should bring their

calendars. Spring Buck said she keeps hearing aspects of the Communications Committee's work in discussion, and maybe we need to keep that committee. Kristine Shaw agreed, saying we need a specific committee or person to report to TCLeG. Kathy Wilsea said she has recently begun to wonder if advisory boards could or should work on a school calendar, so they would have organization meeting in September, and maybe better weather would mean better attendance.

Scott will frame out an agenda template. Karen Edelstein said she is primarily interested in UNA, but can't attend in January. Karen would like to be included in the meeting time selection process. Carol Chock said she feels the TCLeG is very conscious of environmental concerns. Lucia Tyler mentioned that she interacts with other professionals on-line, and suggested EMC develop a bulletin board or list serve for early discussion on topics.

Election of Chair for 2010 – Martha Ferger reported for the Nominating Committee. She, Spring Buck, and Roger Yonkin made contacts, and Roger Segelken is willing to serve as Chair. Appointment moved by Martha, seconded by Spring. There were no nominations from the floor. Appointment passed unanimously by show of hands.

Approval of Minutes -- The minutes of November 18, 2009 were accepted without change. Final minutes are available on the EMC webpage: www.tompkins-co.org/emc.

Reports – Transportation: Spring Buck reported this committee experienced declining attendance as the year progressed. She reviewed their accomplishments. The committee discussed dissolution with the Executive Committee, who were supportive of some of their elements continuing. Pieces can go to other committees. **Ag & Farmland Protection Board:** Although EMC does not have an AFPB liaison right now, Scott Doyle attends for the Planning Department. He said it is a group of farmers and agribusiness operators, with Cooperative Extension providing staff support. AFPB has a role in designating agriculture districts, is working on an update of the Ag Plan, provides evaluation of pre-applications for Purchase of Development Rights projects, and periodically responds to specific petitions of visitors. **Staff:** Kathy Wilsea announced that the Executive Committee has had some unforeseen complications, and have not completed recommendations for new membership. What they did have ready went to PDEQ today and was passed there, and will now go to TCLeG. **Legislature Liaison:** Carol Chock reported PDEQ amended and passed a resolution to DEC on the dsGEIS on gas drilling today. That will go to TCLeG on Tuesday. There was discussion on community groups asking for withdrawal of the dsGEIS and moratorium, and whether moratorium is defensible under NYS law. Carol continued her report by saying the ITCTC is in the process of drafting their 30-year Transportation Plan. TCLeG restored some funding to the Planning Department, and Carol pointed out that was the only department that ended up with more than they asked for. PDEQ had discussion today on building a long-range energy efficiency assessment district. **Staff:** Scott Doyle passed around a press release on the County's new Green Fleet policy. He reminded members that TCPD developed a Conservation Plan for natural resources, and said he is now working on the companion plan for ag resources. Discussion with EMC will be part of the process.

Member Items – Martha Ferger commented that, since we're all watching our thermostats at home, this building seems overheated. Steve Nicholson said the Energy Committee looked at the energy efficiency of meeting spaces, but this site continues for EMC because of its central location. Mark Whitmore provided bumper magnets and ID cards for the Emerald Ash Borer. Part of his work is to get towns to think about the approach of EAB and plan for it. No pesticide treatment is registered in NYS right now. The only one out there is an expensive injection process that needs to be repeated every two years. Unfortunately, shysters will probably be taking advantage of landowners. He warned the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid is also coming our way. Carol Chock retrieved the gas drilling resolution from her vehicle. She said it uses the word moratorium, and she read the conclusion paragraph, which states the document does not comply with SEQR requirements and points out flaws. Kristine Shaw pointed out many landowner contracts automatically extend through moratoria, and the NYS Attorney General is fighting extension of leases. The AG does not want a moratorium because it is mentioned in contracts, and Kristine pointed out "moratorium" has a specific legal meaning which may not be what the Legislature intends. Dan said drilling companies can do site-specific EIS, but it is a cumbersome process, so the industry is waiting for the dsGEIS to be completed. Carol encouraged EMC comments at the Legislature meeting on Tuesday.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

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

Approved by Council on January 13, 2010