

EMC Final Minutes
Oct. 10, 4:00 p.m.
Via Zoom

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Attendance

Member		Seat	Member		Seat
Dan Antonioli	A	Village of Dryden	Elaine Tietjen	P	At-Large
Steve Bissen	P	Town of Dryden	Brad Will	P	At-Large
Louise Bruce	E	At-Large	Ingrid Zabel	P	Town of Ithaca
Christine Collins	P	Town of Ulysses	Jack Zinda	A	At-Large
Cait Darfler	P	Village of Trumansburg	<i>Anne Koreman</i>	P	<i>Legislative Liaison</i>
Edward Dubovi	P	Town of Lansing	<i>Karen Edelstein</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Peter McDonald	E	Town of Danby	<i>Thomas Hirasuna</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
Steve Nicholson	P	Town of Caroline	<i>David Weinstein</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Vacant	X	Town of Enfield	<i>Robert Wesley</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Susan Riley	P	At-Large	Darby Kiley	E	Tompkins Co. staff
Barry Siebe	P	Town of Groton	Kristin McCarthy	P	Tompkins Co. staff
Ron Szymanski	A	Village of Freeville			

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Guests:

Call to Order – Chair Cait Darfler called the meeting to order at 4:03pm.

Agenda Review/Public Comment – No changes to the agenda or public comment.

Group Check-in: Icebreaker Activity – Members broke into small groups and shared fun Halloween costume stories.

Approval of Minutes – The September 2024 draft minutes were approved (motion by Brad Will, second by Chris Collins) as submitted. Steve Bissen abstained. Motion carried.

14 **Executive Committee Report** – Cait gave an overview of the new member onboarding FAQ document,
15 encouraging everyone to review it and provide feedback. The group then discussed the progress of
16 mentor-mentee meetings, with members reporting successful meetings or plans to meet soon. Next, the
17 group reviewed the 2024 goals document, highlighting the need for improved formatting and regular
18 check-ins. They also discussed the strategic planning partnership with Cornell and the resource
19 document for county residents. The group emphasized the need for technical assistance and design
20 help. Updates were provided on several topics, including the bylaws, the UNA committee's work, and
21 the Green Scene newsletter. The group also explored the possibility of a retreat day to foster
22 collaboration and creativity. Members discussed their preferences for more regular updates from
23 County staff and inviting elected officials or other municipal or state staff to attend future EMC
24 meetings. They also brainstormed strategies to improve communication and information sharing,
25 including involving interns from state representatives' offices and scheduling joint meetings with other
26 conservation commissions. Cait shared two important announcements. First, Peter Penniman has
27 stepped down from his seats on the EMC and the Water Resources Council, where he served as the EMC
28 representative. Anyone interested in applying for this seat should reach out to County staff for further

29 details. Second, the Executive Committee recommends Ingrid to fill the vice chair vacancy created by
30 Peter's departure. Cait requested a motion to nominate Ingrid.

31 **Action: Nominate Ingrid Zabel as Vice Chair**

32 Chris Collins made a motion, which Steve Bissen seconded, to nominate Ingrid Zabel for vice chair of the
33 Tompkins County Environmental Management Council. Motion carried.

34 **Member Reviews: NYSACC Conference** – Brad, Elaine, and Steve N. attended the NYS Association of
35 Conservation Commission Conference in Boonville, NY, finding both the virtual offerings and in-person
36 field trips informative and enjoyable. Cait, who attended the virtual component, also had a positive
37 experience. The conference featured engaging speakers and discussions on various topics, including
38 natural resources and water conservation. Brad shared insights into NYSACC's plans for the coming year,
39 which include budgeting, member recruitment, and website improvement. The next conference will be
40 held in the Hudson Valley region. Elaine emphasized how much she enjoyed connecting with colleagues
41 from across New York State.

42 **Municipal Reports (as needed)**

43 Chris reported on a partnership among Ulysses, Enfield, and Newfield under the West Tompkins
44 Initiative to improve sustainability efforts. Their first event is a "trash talk" on the 28th at the Enfield
45 Community Center. Ingrid shared that Ithaca's Conservation Board is proposing a three-year moratorium
46 on plastic carpet installations within town limits, aligning with state legislation and addressing concerns
47 about potential health and environmental impacts. Siobhan informed the group that the City of Ithaca is
48 revising its climate adaptation plan to prioritize resilience, aiming to involve the community in
49 developing the new plan. Ed reported that Lansing's Conservation Advisory Commission is concerned
50 about the potential abandonment of the Norfolk Southern Railroad track. The CAC advocates for the
51 town's acquisition to create a public space, such as a rail trail. Brad shared that Dryden recently received
52 a comprehensive zoning code update from a consultant to address issues like density, environmental
53 initiatives, and connectivity within the town. The Planning Board, Building and Zoning Board, and Town
54 Board are reviewing the consultant's recommendations.

55 **Committee and Task Updates (as needed)**

56 Steve N. provided an overview on plans for the Unique Natural Areas public meeting. Postcards with a
57 link to an interactive map will be mailed to property owners. The public meeting is scheduled for Nov.
58 13 at the Tompkins County Library. The consultants will present the proposed map changes at the
59 meeting, and the website will be updated in the coming days.

60 **Staff Report (as needed)** – None

61 **Legislative Liaison Report (as needed)** – Annie shared that a request was made to add to the Sage
62 Preserve through the County's Natural Infrastructure Capital Program. She also mentioned attending the
63 Upper Susquehanna Coalition's Watershed Wednesday talk, which focused on watersheds and new
64 wetland regulations. Additionally, she discussed efforts to reinstate funding for green facilities in the
65 County budget, particularly a geothermal project at the Department of Emergency Response. The PEEQ
66 committee will also be seeing a presentation by Finger Lakes ReUse of their strategic plan. Finally, she

67 shared that the PEEQ committee will be voting on the amended EMC bylaws and term staggering. Cait
68 plans to attend to answer questions as needed.

69 **Member Announcements** – Ingrid shared that the Paleontological Research Institution (PRI) is working
70 to become a climate change resilience hub. The PRI plans to enhance its existing climate resilience
71 education programs and utilize its facilities, such as the Museum of the Earth, as a cooling center during
72 heat emergencies. The PRI is collaborating with Cornell University's Atkinson Center to further develop
73 this initiative. Barry commented on the challenges and opportunities related to solar energy projects in
74 the region. Participants discussed concerns about environmental impacts and the importance of careful
75 planning. A task force was proposed to delve deeper into these issues, exploring potential solutions such
76 as alternative site selection and improved infrastructure. In closing, Cait reminded everyone that the
77 UNA public meeting will take place in person at Tompkins County Public Library on November 13th. This
78 meeting will substitute for the usual monthly EMC meeting.

79 **Adjournment** – Chair Cait Darfler adjourned the meeting at 5:27pm.