

EMC Minutes
Jan. 9, 4:00 p.m.
CAP ArtSpace/Via Zoom

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Attendance

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

Guests: Ace Dufresne, Melissa Millspaugh, Maia Tsignadze

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. Members and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes – The December 2024 draft minutes were approved (motion by Jack Zinda, second by Christine Collins) as submitted. Brad Will abstained.

Action: Election of 2025 Chair

Steve Nicholson, on behalf of the Nominating Committee (Steve Bissen, Steve Nicholson, Elaine Tietjen), presented the committee’s recommendation for 2025 EMC chair. Nominations were solicited from the floor, but none were offered.

Action: Steve Nicholson made a motion, which Steve Bissen seconded, to re-elect Cait Darfler the 2025 chair of the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council. Motion carried.

Action: Approve Draft Cargill Comments Letter

Members reviewed the draft comments letter addressed to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) regarding their Negative Declaration on Cargill's brine water disposal application. Discussion topics included the DEC's review process, the role of other environmental organizations in submitting technical comments, protocols for individual EMC member communications, infrastructure planning considerations, access to technical information, and the environmental impact statement process. Members also discussed the relationship between regulatory agencies, private industry, and local environmental groups, as well as reporting requirements and information transparency regarding mine operations.

32 **Action:** Ingrid Zabel made a motion, which Barry Siebe seconded, to approve the comments letter and
33 its submission to NYS Department of Environmental Conservation regarding Cargill's Application to
34 Renew and Modify its Mined Land Reclamation Permit for the Cayuga Salt Mine. Motion carried.

35 **Report/Discussion: Walk through upcoming Strategic Plan Class Schedule** – Cait provided an overview
36 of the strategic planning process that the board will participate in as part of a Master of Public
37 Administration graduate-level class. The seven-week class will focus on developing a five-year strategic
38 plan for the EMC. She highlighted key dates, including Jan. 29, when she will provide an overview of the
39 organization to the students. On Feb. 5, the board is encouraged to participate in identifying
40 stakeholders and developing questions for the strategic planning process. Stakeholder interviews will
41 take place the week of Feb. 12, and board members may be paired with students for these interviews.
42 The students will then analyze the data and develop a strategic plan, which will be presented to the
43 board on March 5. The goal of this process is to create a strategic plan that reflects the organization's
44 goals and stakeholder input. The board will then use this plan to inform task planning and decision-
45 making.

46 **Partner Brainstorm/Group Discussion: EMC/County 1-5 Year Vision** – Cait led group in a mini strategic
47 planning session, focusing on visioning hopes and dreams for the next one to five years. Participants
48 partnered up to share their aspirations, with one partner taking notes and summarizing the discussion
49 for the larger group. Ideas shared included increasing community awareness and engagement,
50 streamlining EMC processes, improving public engagement, and expanding the reach of the Green Scene
51 e-newsletter. Other participants' visions included considering Unique Natural Areas as Critical
52 Environmental Areas, addressing environmental toxins, raising community awareness of EMC activities,
53 and promoting balanced conversations on environmental issues. The session aimed to align the group's
54 thinking and generate actionable goals for the EMC's future.

55 **Strategic Planning and Task Groups for 2025** – After a break, Cait introduced the next activity: clustering
56 the shared ideas during the visioning session to facilitate further brainstorming and identification of key
57 priorities. Participants arranged the cards with summarized ideas on the floor, grouping them by theme,
58 with ideas clustering around topics such as public engagement, UNAs, municipal collaboration, and
59 environmental resources. Cait explained that after clustering, participants would vote on their top
60 priorities, emphasizing that this initial voting was not for the final strategic plan but rather to identify
61 initial areas of focus. The group then dot-voted on the themes, with task groups encouraged to schedule
62 meetings to discuss their projects and develop roadmaps.

63 **Continued Planning for 2025** – Group touched base on mentorship program pairing senior members
64 with newcomers, pending updates to UNA Inventory, and progress with online environmental directory.
65 Members noted significant upcoming changes in legislative representation, with several environmentally
66 minded legislators not seeking renewal and two new seats being added through redistricting.
67 Conversation turned to discussion on the importance of strategic messaging to reach moderate
68 stakeholders, particularly in framing environmental initiatives like water management in ways that
69 resonate with constituencies such as farmers.

70 **Adjournment** – Chair Cait Darfler adjourned the meeting at 6:02pm.