

TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

Feb. 26, 2024

Whole Health Rice Room at 55 Brown Rd and Zoom

Final Minutes

Attendance

Member		Seat	Member		Seat
Annie Bastoni	E	At-Large	Frank Proto	P	At-Large
Shawn Bossard	P	Agriculture	Brian Rahm	P	Environment
Cynthia Brock	E	Recreation	Stephanie Redmond	P	At-Large
Liz Cameron	E	Co. Environmental Health	Steve Riddle	E	Water Purveyor
Amanda Champion	P	County Government	Becky Sims	P	Municipal Government
Jenna DeRario	P	Cooperative Extension	Linda Wagenet	P	At-Large
Brett Hayhurst	P	At-Large	Douglas Barnes	P	Associate
Kristen Hychka	E	Municipal Government	Roxy Johnston	P	Associate
Darby Kiley	P	County Planning & Sustain.	Lynn Leopold	P	Associate
Patrick King	E	Business & Industry	Rebecca Minas	P	Associate
Liz Kreitinger	E	Watershed Organization	Elaine Quaroni	P	Associate
Jon Negley	P	Soil & Water Cons. District	Grascen Shidemantle	E	Associate
Holly Payne	P	At-Large	Tom Vawter	E	Associate

Guests: Charlie Cappelino, Ken Jaffe, Peter Penniman, Graham Savio, Liz Thomas

Call to Order/Agenda Review – Vice Chair Frank Proto called the meeting to order at 4:15pm.

Privilege of the Floor – No guests requested to speak.

Presentation/Discussion: Water Quality Project Funding -- Owasco Lake Ditch Remediation Program

Ann Robson, OWLA President, Dan Kuhn, Roadside Ditches Remediation Manager

Ann Robson, president of the Owasco Watershed Lake Association, introduced herself and Dan Kuhn, the project manager for the ditch remediation program. Dan discussed the cooperative arrangement between the association and the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District, emphasizing the need to mitigate nutrient flow to prevent harmful algal blooms. He explained the funding structure, with the association providing 25% local share and New York State funding covering 75%. Ann highlighted fundraising efforts through grants from local foundations and emphasized collaborations with the Soil and Water Conservation District for project implementation. They discussed the expansion of remediation efforts to fire lane ditches and culverts and the importance of prioritizing projects within their watershed. In response to questions about project assessment and data collection, Ann acknowledged the need for better follow-through, particularly with town highway departments.

Seneca Lake Sediment, Nutrient, and Pollution Reduction Program

Ron Klinczar, SLPWA

Representing the Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association as the organization's secretary, Ron highlighted their commitment to addressing pollutants like phosphorus. Ron outlined strategies, including collaboration with the Seneca Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization to secure grant funding. He discussed projects like wetland reconnections and retention ponds to reduce sediment flow into the lake. Additionally, they've supported initiatives like cover crops and ditch stabilizations with local counties. Ron emphasized the importance of equitable fund distribution and donor contributions for sustainability. Despite challenges, he urged collaboration

and support from donors and stakeholders. When asked about replicating similar efforts, Ron stressed the need for a diverse, technically proficient board and engaged membership.

Discussion

After the presentations, the group discussed exploring funding options for water quality improvement projects, including collaboration with soil and water conservation districts. A proposal to establish a committee for further investigation was made, emphasizing the need to revisit previous strategies and seek new funding avenues. The group acknowledged grant challenges and stressed thorough research into available opportunities. Participants discussed leveraging funds for watershed management, using drinking water source protection plans to support projects needing additional funding, and exploring alternative sources like private donations and collaborations with organizations like local foundations. Project applications require proper planning, engineering, and permitting. Darby will send out a poll to form an ad hoc committee to delve deeper into funding opportunities, highlighting the importance of strategic approaches and collaboration.

Action: Approval of draft minutes – The January 2023 meeting minutes were not approved due to lack of quorum.

Committee Reports

No reports.

Chair and Staff Reports

Frank did not have a chair's report. Darby reported on the Owasco Watershed Rules and Regulations letter, which was sent out and received positive feedback. Suggestions for a site visit location for the April WRC meeting were solicited. Discussion moved to the FEMA flood maps and the 90-day appeal period, noting potential impacts on homeowners, particularly in Ithaca.

Member Announcements

Updates were shared related to the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization, Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, and Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation District, including grant applications, best management practices, guest presentations from groups like the Finger Lakes Land Trust, culvert and ditch management projects, and more. Amanda Champion was warmly welcomed back as the County Legislature representative on the WRC.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 5:50pm.