

EMC Final Minutes
March 14, 4:00 p.m.
Via Zoom

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Attendance

Member		Seat	Member		Seat
Steve Bissen	P	Town of Dryden	Jeff Walker	A	Village of Cayuga Heights
Louise Bruce	P	At-Large	Brad Will	P	At-Large
Christine Collins	P	Town of Ulysses	Ingrid Zabel	P	Town of Ithaca
Cait Darfler	P	Village of Trumansburg	<i>Anne Koreman</i>	P	<i>Legislative Liaison</i>
Brandon Hoak	A	At-Large	<i>Lindsay Dombroskie</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Steve Nicholson	P	Town of Caroline	<i>Karen Edelstein</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Peter Penniman	P	Town of Enfield	<i>Thomas Hirasuna</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
Susan Riley	P	At-Large	<i>David Weinstein</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Lisa Strayer	A	At-Large	<i>Robert Wesley</i>	A	<i>Associate Member</i>
Ron Szymanski	P	Village of Freeville	Darby Kiley	P	Tompkins Co. staff
Elaine Tietjen	P	At-Large	Kristin McCarthy	E	Tompkins Co. staff

5 **Guests:** Dan Antonioli

6 **Call to Order** – Chair Cait Darfler called the meeting to order at 4:02pm.

7 **Agenda Review/Public Comment** – No changes to agenda. No public comment.

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9 **Approval of Minutes** – The February 2024 draft minutes were approved (motion by Steve Nicholson,
 10 second by Peter Penniman) as submitted.

11 **Presentation/Discussion: NYS Water Resources Institute: Addressing critical water resource issues in**
 12 **New York State through research, outreach, and education** – *Kristen Hychka*

13 Cait introduced Kristen Hychka from the New York State Water Resources Institute (WRI). Kristen
 14 outlined WRI's mission to address statewide water issues through research, collaboration, and outreach.
 15 She explained their interdisciplinary approach and focus areas, including water infrastructure, climate
 16 resilience, water quality, and aquatic ecosystems. Kristen highlighted specific WRI projects such as dam
 17 removal for ecological benefits, research on emerging contaminants like PFAS, and efforts to promote
 18 flood awareness. She emphasized WRI's local presence, including research in Tompkins County and
 19 collaborations with organizations like the Water Resources Council. During the Q&A, Kristen discussed
 20 challenges in contaminant research, the complexities of flood mitigation, and WRI's partnerships and
 21 funding process (RFPs released in late fall).

22 **Executive Committee Report** – Cait provided updates on the development of new member orientation
 23 materials, a presentation she gave to a Newfield Girl Scout troop on behalf of the EMC, and the
 24 monitoring of potential "Skip the Stuff" legislation aimed at reducing single-use waste. Additionally, she
 25 shared that the EMC is collaborating with the County Legislature to update bylaws, which will
 26 necessitate changes to the membership structure to maintain quorum requirements. A draft of the
 27 updated bylaws will be shared for discussion among members.

28 **Municipal Update: Village of Freeville** – Ron Szymanski

29 Ron Szymanski reported on current initiatives within the Village of Freeville. He highlighted the Freeville
30 Farmers Market, which runs from May to October and supports local, sustainable agriculture. He also
31 encouraged visits to the Genung Reserve, a bird sanctuary that is particularly active during the spring.
32 Ron noted that many residents of the stable, close-knit Freeville community have signed up for
33 community solar programs.

34 **Report: NYS Green Building Conference 2024** – Brad Will

35 Brad Will reported on his experience attending the 29th annual NYS Green Building Conference. The two-
36 day event, hosted by SUNY-ESF, featured numerous presentations and focused heavily on
37 decarbonization strategies, including passive house design, embodied carbon reduction, mass timber
38 construction, solar energy, complete streets, district geothermal, and climate justice. Brad emphasized
39 the importance of staying current on advancements within the green building industry and plans to
40 share additional conference resources and information with interested council members.

41 **Municipal Reports (as needed)** – None

42 **Committee Updates (as needed)** – Steve N. shared that the Unique Natural Areas (UNA) committee
43 recently held its first meeting of the year. The committee has a budget of \$900, which will be used for
44 public outreach projects and to purchase thumb drives for distributing UNA updates to municipalities.
45 The committee is currently reviewing approximately 70 edits to existing UNA boundaries. Additionally,
46 the County Planning & Sustainability Department will review the tax foreclosure list to identify any
47 properties that overlap with UNAs.

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

49 **Member Announcements** – New members Elaine Tietjen and Louise Bruce introduced themselves to
50 the group. Elaine will likely assist with education and outreach initiatives, while Louise will serve as an
51 informal liaison to the Climate and Sustainable Energy Advisory Board, on which she also holds a seat.
52 Several EMC members took the opportunity to introduce themselves to the new members.

53 **Legislative Liaison Update** – Annie Koreman shared that the County is exploring geothermal district
54 heating and cooling for the Center of Government building project. She also commented on a recent
55 Ithaca Area Economic Development meeting presentation by a consultant exploring regional land
56 development opportunities. Of particular interest was a focus on promoting battery storage
57 manufacturing.

58 **Meeting Wrap-up** – In closing, Cait encouraged anyone with questions to stay on for a few minutes after
59 the meeting or to follow up with her, Kristin, or the entire group via email. She also indicated that the
60 next meeting would allow more time for task and project updates.

61 **Adjournment** – Chair Cait Darfler adjourned the meeting at 5:33pm.