



Broome County Environmental Management Council

Debra A. Preston, County Executive

Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC)
Notes from meeting held on Wednesday, January 9th, 2013 at 4:30pm
Exhibit Room, Broome County Library
185 Court Street, Binghamton, NY

Present:

MAL: Bill Heaviside, Marley Urdanick, Karen Ciatyk, Tony Lubzanski, Shelbi DuBord, Chris Burger and Alex Urda

CAC Reps: Andre LaClair (Fenton)

Staff: Beth Lucas

Associate Members: Julia Hoover

Others: Tom Evans, Mike Sopchak (BC Legislature)

1. The meeting was **convened at 4:30 pm**. Bill moved and Andre seconded the motion to approve the December minutes with corrections to two typographical errors. All in favor, motion approved.

2. Announcements /Privilege of the floor/ Items of Interest

- Beth mentioned that New York's Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan for the Chesapeake Bay TMDL had been submitted to the EPA by the NYSDEC who developed the document in cooperation with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and other groups. This document is the next phase in a program requiring the Bay states to reduce pollutant loads into the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- Members discussed the press release regarding the creation of an Office of Energy Development by the County Executive. Beth mentioned that at this point she had very limited information but would keep the group posted going forward. The creation of the office is still awaiting legislative approval but if implemented would provide an excellent opportunity for EMC to assist with education and policy opportunities. There was a question about whether the office would focus mainly on natural gas development, but Legislator Sopchak assured that it is a broader focus on energy efficiency for County operations, among other things.
- Karen informed the members that Ron Dalton, a local archaeologist who had participated in the EMC previously and many members were familiar with, had passed away. The group expressed their condolences and reflected on a presentation he had given regarding the plentiful archaeological resources in the County.
- Beth noted that the update to the Broome County Hazard Mitigation Plan is nearing completion. When the draft is ready, it will be posted to the County webpage and submitted to FEMA for approval. She will give an update on the content of the plan at a later meeting once information is more finalized. Julia mentioned concerns about flooding in her basement in Endicott, she fears that it may be coming up from under the levee and suggested this be included in the plan.
- Chris mentioned that he sits on the committee for the Center for Civic Engagement, which works with BCC and Binghamton University on increasing public involvement in government. They has organized opportunities for facilitated discussion on several topics. One that the group is interested in doing in the future is the issue of Sustainability. He wondered if the County-wide Comprehensive Plan would present an opportunity for this. Beth indicated that sustainability principles would be incorporated but that due to the schedule of the plan she didn't think it would be a good fit. She did suggest that the City is currently working on their plan with funds received to focus on sustainability. There was discussion that there may be opportunities to focus on an event partnered with the EMC.

3. Committee and CAC Updates

- Fenton CAC – Andre noted that the group continued to discuss the issue of Unique Natural Areas in Fenton. They came to the conclusion that even if parcels weren't "unique" in the sense that there was something rare or endangered located there, it would make sense to keep a database of the areas that were considered special on a local scale.
- Vestal CAC – Cindy was not in attendance, so no update was provided.
- Natural Resources Committee – There was no meeting in December. The group continues to work on the Open Space Plan

4. Membership and Administrative Items

- Beth mentioned that she had sent a memo to the County Executive to inform her of the EMC recommendations for membership appointments. She has not heard back but will keep the group updated as they move forward.
- By-laws review – The group went through the by-laws item by item to review them and see if there were items that warrant changing. After review the group decided that any potential changes would be minor and didn't warrant going through the amendment process at this time.
- The group went through the adopted 2013 Work Plan and discussed the implementation of the action items associated with each task to assign members to them. See red text in attached work plan.
- The group discussed the possibility of hosting a public education workshop that would address water resource management associated with natural gas development. Members feel that this would be a good idea and we should move forward with planning it. Some ideas included Joe Graney from Binghamton University's Geology Department, Steve Penningroth from the Community Science Institute, Bill Kappel from USGS and Mike Lovegreen from Bradford County.
- The group had a lengthy discussion about membership recruitment and the implementation of the work plan by members. A key point that was discussed was the need for concrete and focused tasks so that potential members feel their time is well spent. Many members also expressed a desire to interact more regularly with County officials to get a better sense of what tasks the EMC should focus on that would be useful to them. Legislator Sopchak noted that in this time of limited resources, it is important that any initiatives brought before the legislature do not have associated cost increases. Many of the members emphasized that the issues that they the group addresses are intended to increase efficiencies and result in improvements that would benefit County agencies and residents. There was further discussion about outlets for public outreach and membership activities. Members also suggested an effort be made to educate the legislature and other county officials about the mission of the EMC and ways that the EMC can partner to achieve these goals. The group also discussed the idea of reinstating the Membership committee to take on these tasks.

5. The meeting was **adjourned at 6:30 pm**. The next meeting will be held on **February 13th, 2013 @ 4:30pm**.