



Broome County Environmental Management Council

Debra A. Preston, County Executive

Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC)

Notes from meeting held on Wednesday, November 14th, 2012 at 4:30pm

Exhibit Room, Broome County Library

185 Court Street, Binghamton, NY

Present:

MAL: Bill Heaviside, Chris Burger, Marley Urdanick, Shelbi DuBord, Dylan Horvath, Alex Urda

CAC Reps: Cindy Westerman (Vestal)

Staff: Beth Egitto

Associate Members: Julia Hoover

Others: Wayne Jennings, Alex Cook, Tom Evans

1. The meeting was **convened at 4:30 pm.**
2. **Special Presentation: Zero Waste (or pretty darn close) – Chris Burger, EMC Member-at-Large**

Chris gave some background about how his family got into reducing their waste. Upon personal reflection he and his wife decided to do their part to reduce their own waste. They built their home to be more energy efficient and made a commitment to refrain from buying anything that they couldn't take responsibility for. He recognized that there are environmental and social impacts to waste disposal and his family wanted to take responsibility for where the waste was going. Incineration is not the answer since it leaves residue in landfill and releases atmospheric wastes. Landfills also aren't necessarily the best long term solution since the costs and maintenance of landfills continues for a long time and atmospheric gases are released. There is also a large amount of organics in landfills which have another outlet through composting.

To achieve the minimal amount of waste produced Chris practices the 5 R's: Refuse – avoid use of items that create waste to begin with; Reduce and Reuse – use good quality items and those that are reusable; Recycle – utilize public and private recycling opportunities; Reclaim – Composting to make a usable product (has a compost bin and associated shredder set up, also recommends worm boxes for smaller homes/apts). On the issue of composting, Chris believes that better commercial composting will improve accessibility for urban residents and allow the expansion into more types of materials.

Chris works with the Sierra Club's Zero Waste Committee and talked about some of their efforts. This includes the promotion of Resource Recovery Park's which would incorporate all opportunities for the waste stream: Materials Recycling Facility, Electronics (and other hard to recycle items), Compost, Construction and Demolition Debris, and a Reuse Center. This will allow for broader and more comprehensive waste disposal opportunities. The group also works on extended producer responsibility, which holds a producer of a product responsible throughout its life cycle, providing appropriate outlets for waste created by that product. Discussion followed.

3. **Announcements /Privilege of the floor/ Items of Interest**

- Julia gave a couple of updates regarding articles that she had come across. These include articles regarding urban farming, climate change and extreme weather events, updates about the DEC deadline regarding the SGEIS for hydrofracking, and the update of flood maps. She felt that these would be some great topics for hosting speakers at future meetings. Julia also indicated that she is

moving forward with an energy assessment at her home through the Green Jobs Green NY program. She will share the results with the group.

- Beth mentioned that there is a workshop scheduled by the NYSDEC ReLeaf program for training related to urban trees, invasive species impacting trees, and tree planting and maintenance. It will be held Tuesday December 11th in Syracuse. Beth circulated a flyer advertising the event.
- Beth gave an update on the development of the Two Rivers Greenway Sign Plan and Design Guide. The group is nearing completion of the guide and a final presentation will be held on December 5th at the Broome County Library

4. Committee and CAC Updates

- Natural Resources Committee – The group did not meet in October. The November meeting will focus on reviewing updates to the plan that Bill has made recently the Open Space Plan draft and reviewing the status of the remaining sections for completion.
- Vestal CAC – Cindy missed the previous CAC meeting but she gave an update that the group is currently focusing on the potential logging at Jones Park, which despite its removal from a previous budget, has been included once again.
- Fenton CAC – Andre could not attend so there was no update.

5. Membership and Administrative Items

- Beth reminded members that they should fill out their nomination forms for members of the executive committee that had been emailed to them previously. These should be returned to her before Thanksgiving. She circulated blank forms as well.
- Beth circulated a draft calendar marking potential meeting dates for the coming year. Members should review these and inform Beth of any issues prior to the December meeting where the group will vote for approval.
- Beth circulated a copy of the 2012 work plan items for members to review. Members should include ideas for what is to be included in the 2013 work plan on their nomination form. One item in particular that Beth brought up was the Joyce K.L. Smith Environmental Photography Competition. While Beth has attempted to keep the event in her work plan the past couple of years, it has been difficult to maintain due to the large amount of time associated with it. Currently Beth organizes the event and there is no assistance from members, except contributing items for the reception. Also, the event, while it is good promotion for the EMC, has not resulted in new memberships and has started to focus more on the photography aspects rather than the environmental aspects making it difficult to justify in the context of Beth's planning duties. If the event is going to remain in the work plan, members will have to step up and take on the tasks associated with the event. While some members had ideas about how to change the show, there were no volunteers to take on the tasks associated with keeping it going. The general consensus at the meeting was that it may be better to focus time on other things and that members weren't interested in taking on more of the responsibility for running the program. Beth offered to send an email to participants to alert them to the changes and offer the opportunity for individuals or another organization to continue the event. Beth will contact those members not in attendance at this meeting prior to taking action to see if they would like to step up for this program.

- 6. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm. The next meeting will be held on December 12th, 2012 @ 4:30pm.**