



Broome County Environmental Management Council

Debra A. Preston, County Executive

Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC) Notes from meeting held on Wednesday, April 11th, 2012 at 4:30pm Exhibit Room, Broome County Library 185 Court Street, Binghamton, NY

Present:

MAL: Bill Heaviside, Chris Burger, Tony Lubzanski, Erin Heard and Dylan Horvath.

Staff: Beth Egitto

Others: Natalie Limbach, Maria Martinez, Eleanor Haines, John Mecklenburg, Keith Heron, Michael Herz, Maureen Hawlz, Cole Moore, Deb Overfield, Donna Hanly and Peter Yeager.

1. The meeting was convened at 4:30 pm.

- Beth welcomed the group and gave a brief overview of what the EMC is about and how to get involved.

2. Chip(Charles) McElwee Presentation

- His presentation compared the flood in June of 2006 to the most recent flood in September of 2011 to give us an idea of the magnitude of the storms and reasons why/where major flooding occurred. The Binghamton area is known as “Flood Alley”. He compared the two storms using meteorological data to show that the majority of the heavy rain fell in the Susquehanna and Chenango rivers watersheds. In the most recent flood in September, no flood control systems failed but the hydrology of the storm was overwhelming; the water rose 6-8 inches ABOVE of flood walls.
- Chip reviewed potential reasons for flooding:
 - i. Lack of flood control
 - ii. Development- houses built in flood plain
 - iii. Land use controls
 - iv. Intense rainfall
 - v. Nature of watersheds-“flashy watersheds”
 - vi. Economic-\$\$
- Chip showed lots of pictures of homes/neighborhoods that were destroyed, roads and bridges that were almost completely knocked away, and how a small stream could cause major damage to a property. He also showed pictures of successful flood mitigation projects. However these can be expensive and while they protect that specific structure, they are not an answer for all flooding issues. He finished by explaining that dealing with flooding locally will be the result of several varied projects, there is no one project that will be the answer. Since several factors are involved, science, economics, social impacts, it is really the role of municipal officials to make the decisions that balance these factors. Some possible options:
 - i. More flood walls
 - ii. Flood control dams

- iii. Flood plain management/buy-outs
- iv. Land use controls
- v. Wetland creation
- vi. Education and flood proofing
- Questions followed about dredging the river as a possible solution. From research Chip has done he has not found evidence that this would have a major impact. He believes that while at times structural projects are necessary from a risk standpoint, working with the natural tendencies of the streames is the best way to minimize the impacts of flooding.

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

- Minutes are reviewed, changed are made. Bill moves to approve the March minutes, Chris seconds; all in favor, March minutes approved.
- Beth circulated a notice of a summer internship available with Green Jobs Green NY to assist in eligibility assessments for home energy audits.
- Broome County is working with other counties and local municipalities in the Southern Tier Economic Development Council Region on a Regional Sustainability Plan through the Cleaner Greener NY grant program. The EMC had previously sent a letter in support to Tompkins County who is taking the lead on the grant. They are currently in the process of scheduling stakeholder meetings but Beth didn't have any further information at this time.

4. Committee and CAC Updates

- Natural Resources Committee - Bill updated the council about the meeting held on March 28th. Julian Shepherd from Binghamton University came to present on his inventory of Unique Natural Areas in Broome County. Julian documented areas of local importance for biodiversity. He would like municipalities, agencies and private property owners to be able to use this information in their planning efforts.
- Vestal CAC- Cindy reported that the group is continuing to work on their list of concerns regarding hydrofracking.

5. Membership and Administrative Items

- Ross Park Zoo Earth Day is April 21st and 22nd. The group agreed that since Earth Day Southern Tier's Earth Fest was cancelled this year, this would be a good event to attend. Beth requested that members sign up for a time slot for the EMC's informational table.
- JKLS Environmental Photo Show- Beth also requested that members sign up to help set-up, bring food items and to help clean up, for the Opening Reception.
- Beth mentioned that the EMC now has a Facebook group! You can post on the page and "like" the page. People who you are friends with will be able to see when you post articles or anything about EMC.
- Beth mentioned that Bruce Oldfield, a Geology professor from Broome Community College will give a presentation at the May meeting regarding local geology.

- 6. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm. The next meeting will be held on May 9th, 2012 @ 4:30pm.**