

Broome County Environmental Management Council

Patrick J. Brennan, Broome County Executive



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Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC)

Notes from the meeting held Thursday, October 6, 2011

Town of Chenango Community Hall, 1529 State Route 12, Chenango, NY 13901

Present:

Members-at-Large: Andre LaClair, Bill Heaviside and Karen Ciatyk

CAC Reps: Cindy Westerman (Vestal)

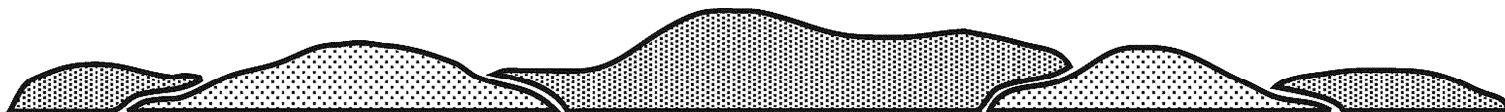
Staff: Beth Egitto, BC Planning

Other: Shelbi Hale, Magda Masquita Mckeller, Len Rittenburg, Marco de Luca, Bob Rittenburg, Dan Coleman

1. The meeting was **convened at 5:00 pm.**

2. **Privilege of the Floor/Announcements/Member Items of Interest**

- Shelbi Hale introduced herself. She is interested in student membership on the council. She is a graduate student at Binghamton University working on recycling issues.
- Magda Masquita Mckeller is an intern at the EMC, currently working on a map book for the Broome County Natural Resources Inventory and Management Plan and educational materials for homeowners who want to manage stormwater at home.
- Beth explained that the Riverbank Clean up was cancelled because of safety concerns and that it was unlikely that the emergency services would have approved the activity. Also, it is probably that haulers are very overwhelmed with debris removal.
- Beth passed around information on the Loft Tour in downtown Binghamton; the objective is to generate interest for people who want to live in the downtown area.
- There is a scholarship available for EMC members to attend the Conference on the Environment in Rensselaerville, NY, which early registration deadline is October 7th. Beth is not sure if she is attending.
- Beth sent a notice to sign up for the stormwater training. She will send out a reminder tomorrow.
- A group from Binghamton University environmental planning course wants to work with the Stormwater Coalition for a class project. They will be looking at a location to design a rain garden as a demonstration project. It is not certain if there will be money to construct it, however, they are interested in getting donations and volunteer work. Most of the Coalition members are busy right now with flood recovery work, but the student group has agreed that they would like to move forward independently. This type of work may be something that the EMC would like to contribute to in the future.
- Beth informed the group that there is a grant opportunity for a regional sustainability plan. The Tompkins County Planning Department is taking on the role as leading applicant. They are going to be applying for the grant for the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council area. The project is intended to look at energy future and investment in infrastructure associated with smart growth transport and their impact on climate change. The second round of funding will be for implementation of the plan. They are looking for support for the project. Beth proposed to draft a letter from the Council in support of the project. There is \$9 million available under the program. Each regional council can get up to \$1 million. The plan is necessary in order to be eligible for next round of funding to implement the plans, \$12 million for the upstate region. The state now requires incorporation of smart growth principles in order to get funding state investment. Once the grant is received the plan needs to be done in eight months which is one of the reasons why it was not possible to be done by Broome County. All of the grant programs now have to be funneled through the regional councils. A summary of the project was circulated. Beth proposed to draft the support letter. Cindy made a motion to approve a letter of support in favor of the project. The motion was seconded by Andre. All in favor, motion carried.



3. Committee and CAC items

- **Natural Resources Committee** - Magda has been working on the Open Space Plan maps and outlining what will be included in each map. She is now looking at what items have layers already in Broome County's GIS, where missing items can be found through other agencies, and possible layers that can be created in house. Beth and Magda will meet with the mapping department in order to develop the maps. Magda will email the list she has created with the maps and layers for NRC members to review.
- **Vestal CAC** - Cindy reported that the Vestal CAC had two meetings since the last EMC meeting, one in July and one in August. The meeting in September was cancelled because the library was not available. Representatives from the Friends of Vestal attended the July meeting. They were concerned about road damage and noise pollution coming from gas drilling. They are trying to persuade the town to enact protections against road damage and asking for support. They are trying to get a road ordinance and a noise ordinance. Additionally in the meeting they discussed a field trip to Jones Park they had in June. They talked about what they found. They did not find a lot of ash trees, which had been cited as a reason for logging at that location. In the July and August meeting they discussed the Jones Park forest inventory and the Ford track. Cindy further explained that the forester was not sure if they would do the survey. Victor Lamoureux attended the August meeting. He is a candidate to fulfill one of the member open positions. The CAC received appointments for everybody for two years. They also discussed more about the forest inventory with the residents. There is not a schedule for the next meeting yet.
- **Fenton CAC** - Andre reported on the planning process they are going through for the organization and that they have been talking about the forms they want to use for county planning and 239 reviews. They also looked at the inventory for the open spaces plan and he updated the people on the process.

4. Membership and Administrative Items

- Beth is working on getting together the calendar for next year looking at changing the meetings times and meetings schedule due to the participation issues. She clarified that there are eleven voting members, eight plus the CAC/Special representatives. Beth has been having discussions with staff of the executive office and other colleagues about possible nominations for membership. Beth is proposing that meeting closer to the end of the work day, as several other boards do, might make it easier for prospective members to attend. Members stated that they are flexible to meet. Beth thinks the first week of the month works since there are no legislative committee meetings. Some people are having conflicts right now due to the schedule. Beth considers the library to be a convenient place to meet although it has been used for the FEMA right now. Dan Schofield will come next month to give a talk. Beth proposes to hold special events twice a year with special speakers for the general public. The United Way is available; however, they have been issues with booking the facilities and other inconveniences. It was suggested she contact people and get their opinions. Cindy considers that it is important to get people committed.
- The next NRC meeting was scheduled for October 20th at 4:00 pm. Beth informs that due to security reasons it is necessary to leave the office building by 5:00 pm, so any meeting will have to be done by that time. Karen will be checking with the JC library for room availability for the meeting [Editor's note: the meeting was subsequently scheduled at the BC Library on Court Street].

5. draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement for Natural Gas Drilling

The comment deadline for the Environmental Impact Statement is December 12th. There will be public hearings on November 17th from 1:00 to 4:00 and from 6:00 to 9:00. Beth proposes to look at the proposed regulations and how they are going to impact the county operations and some municipal operations. The League of Women Voters in Tioga County was planning to hold a special presentation on this topic but it was cancelled due to flooding issues. Since all of the members in attendance were on the Natural Resources Committee, the matter will be discussed at the NRC meeting.

6. Guest Presentation: Eric Johnston, Gleason Geothermal

- Beth was notified via email that the speaker had car troubles on the way to the meeting. Therefore the presentation had to be cancelled. There was a brief discussion among those that were in attendance about their experiences with geothermal installation.
7. The meeting adjourned at 6:20pm. **Next meeting:** Thursday, November 3rd at 3pm in the Exhibit Room of the Broome County Library.