

Ulster County Environmental Management Council
Monthly Meeting, Howard C. St. John room, SUNY Ulster
May 26, 2010 7:00pm

Attendance:

Chair: Steve Noble

Municipal Representatives:

Joe Liuni, Rosendale

Dave Haldeman, Shawangunk

John Sansalone, Gardiner

Gregg Swanzey, Kingston

Catherine Quick, Esopus

Henry Bartosik, Wawarsing

Lillian Green, Rochester

At Large Members:

William More

Julie Noble

Guests:

Amanda LaValle, Dept of the Envi.

Mary Burke

Pat Barnes

Ethan Roland

Miriam Strouse

Meredith Neirenberg, NYSERDA: Point of Contact for the Hudson Valley's Focus on Local Govt

Sarah Charlop-Powers, NYSERDA

Meeting called to order at 7:06pm. Steve introduced the guests.

Speakers: Sarah and Meredith presented on the range of programs available to municipalities and individuals and the Focus on Local Government Program. Literature was made available and Amanda has extras for those who may need more. Sarah discussed the Energy Audit program, which includes an audit of municipal buildings and a report with suggestions for upgrades to energy efficiencies, including the payback period. Municipalities can also participate in Wind, Solar and new construction programs. SEE ATTACHED FOR MORE INFO ABOUT SPECIFIC PROGRAMS. There are programs for new businesses, the residential sector and for low income residents. Sarah offered the NYSERDA office as a resource, for direct support for anyone in the County. The office is located at 3 Field Court, 2nd Floor, in Kingston, 331-2238.

Sarah also mentioned the SUNY Clean Energy Technology Training, for people to be trained for solar, wind installers, and a variety of green collar jobs.

Sarah mentioned PACE (property assessed clean energy program) where dedicated funds are set up on the municipal level so that loans related to energy efficiency measures are associated with the home and not the home owner. IT stays with the home, with the property taxes, as a form of loan repayment. There are about 27 states that have passed legislation allowing this type of program. In New York,

Babylon and Bedford have moved forward with this. There could be momentum around county-wide efforts to support this. Sarah suggested that there may be a forum locally in the future on this topic. PACE enabling legislation has come across in the state legislature, but got hung up because it was associated with federal stimulus funds. Gregg asked about if there is a limit to the amount of money that could be available through this program. Sarah explained that there is a cap to how much you can borrow and that you also have to prove that there is a payback structure that is reasonable.

Meredith spoke about the Focus on Local Government Program. This is to help municipalities to benchmark their climate emissions and then to develop a climate action/energy management plan for the municipality. They also support the DEC Climate Smart Community Program and ICLEI. Steve mentioned that Kingston is working with Meredith and is very pleased with the work being done.

John asked about the longevity of NYSERDA and about whether or not it is a state effort. Sarah explained that it is a separate fund of money that supports NYSERDA. John also suggested that the UCCEMC hosts a forum, directed towards elected officials regarding PACE. Steve suggested that the UCCEMC could co-host a forum of this sort. Mary suggested that PACE could be presented to the local mayors/supervisors. Sarah mentioned that there is a meeting set up to meet with town assessors. John addressed that he has concerns about resistance from tax assessors and tea-baggers.

Bill mentioned that he had a home energy audit done, with local contractors, with great success.

Minutes: Steve said that he tried to post everything on Ning and questioned whether people could get into it, Bill could. The minutes were also emailed out. Bill moved, Joe seconded to accept the minutes, with the changes, all were in favor.

Dept of the Environment: Amanda brought copies of the Questions for Vendors related to outdoor LED lighting. She spoke about the MS4 county's annual report. A newsletter was sent out in county paychecks with Quick Tips for Saving Energy, Resources and the Environment. This may be done again, via email the next time. The MS4 annual report is available online if anyone is interested, and Amanda reviewed the information with the group, including passing around a review of the report. The county has six minimum control measures, including: public education and outreach (support towns in their compliance, workshops for towns), Involvement/Participation (Cornell Cooperative Extension did a rain garden grant and has gardens at three sites in the county as education, UCRRA did a Household Hazardous Waste Event, including pharmaceuticals), Illicit discharge detection and elimination (checking and inspecting county outfalls: 27% of county road outfalls and all county building site outfalls were done), Construction site runoff control, Post-construction storm water management practices, and pollution prevention and housekeeping (inspecting catch basins and road/street cleaning, legislation against pesticides and herbicides on county property). John brought a question up about the Vortechs system and county garages, that washing with water only is permissible, but not with soap or detergents, carwashes should either connect to public sanitary sewers, or pump out or haul it out. Also, John mentioned that the DEC has BMPs for this as well. Amanda will follow up with this. Bill also mentioned that Amanda should update the number of parts washers at their garages, based on the report and his findings. Steve suggested that we should all check to make sure our towns have submitted their reports if they are MS4, due date is June 1st. Gregg asked about the law enforcement center retention pond and the right of way/accommodation with the rail trail.

Website/Listserv: check it out: www.ucenvironment.ning.com, there are new updates, once people become members, there are many options

UC CAC Networking Event: A few folks met to plan this event. The date is going to be **Wednesday, June 30, 6:30-8:30pm, at UCCC.** The theme will be preparing communities for watershed work. Purpose is to bring CAC members together along with other resource people and watershed groups. This event will hopefully will encourage people for Creek Week. Pot luck desserts are encouraged. Steve will be setting up another meeting for planning prior to the event.

Creek Week Watershed Awareness Event: first two weeks, starting Sept 7-19. This will coincide with the HRV Ramble.

Oath of Office: Steve reminder people to sign this, and that so far there is no word about John Sansalone, Miriam's or Joe's letters yet, Amanda will follow up.

New Business: Mary asked whether the NYSACC Conference on the Environment is ever held in Ulster County. This year's is going to be sponsored by ELLA, at the Thayer Hotel in West Point, November 19-21st, which is our same region.

John brought up the EPF being used to run the parks for the state. Environmental subcommittee and trails committee could be good forums for this topic.

Roundabout:

John, Gardiner: working on water protection law, trying to get it reactivated; working on a draft "wetlands" law; NYWEA's annual spring conference is coming up in two weeks, in Rochester; state: three is a potential crisis situation for the DEC for funding, there is an early retirement incentive program that may be passed; furloughs: that is still in play, the agency may change dramatically

Ethan: is considering joining the Marbletown ECC

Catherine, Esopus: had a clean up of the Sleightsburg Spit on the Rondout Creek, putting together brochure about CAC, recycling, did a tree give away

Joe, Rosendale; June 6th is EarthFest, combined with farmers market, is free;

Bill: the first major effort from the federal level regarding the passing of the regulations that lead paint removal must be supervised by a licensed inspector may change the regulations; Bill will not be in attendance for the next two months due to back surgery

Pat: Marbletown, she just joined, they are trying to build their board, they have been addressing issues including a recent energy audit; they are looking at PACE and there is a lot of interest in moving forward; one of the members is exploring ICLEI and Climate Change initiatives

Hank: Wawarsing, has been away for a few weeks, explored some literature from Germany regarding hydrogeology and world-wide water situations; Hank attended a Rondout Creek Watershed Council meeting, which addressed concerns along the creek, Hank is concerned about the grant Clearwater has attained and moving ahead without completing the evaluation of the condition of the Creek below the reservoir; he also sent info from the Salem CAC to Steve and Amanda for reference, is concerned about the UC EMC holding a stronger position with the legislature and making more recommendations

Dave, Shawangunk: handed out another 500 more seedlings

Gregg, Kingston: Has been addressing cat legislation, made recommendations to the Laws and Rules committee regarding non-emotional, factual, researched recommendations regarding spaying and neutering, licensing, feeding, etc. feral and stray cats; Climate Smart Pledge is still moving forward; Gregg also mentioned that the Kingston Farmer's Market is opening this weekend, he will be biking from downtown to uptown;

Mary, Woodstock: they have passed a wetlands and watercourse law and have had four applicants where this applied; the town now has a wetlands delineator on the planning board; the town has had an energy audit done of the municipal buildings, will be working on addressing the energy efficiency measures; the WEC is looking for one more member; the Comeau property has a large old building on it, that houses the municipal offices and needs to be addressed for space limitations, also there are trails that are highly utilized, though it is leading to Sawkill stream bank degradation, so some of the trails are being moved, expanding the soccer field, concerns for vernal pools; Woodstock has a Farm Festival on Wednesday afternoons

Julie mentioned the Kayaking tours and the Junior Naturalist programs that Kingston Parks and Rec offer; Kingston Kayak Fest June 12th Kingston Point Beach 10-4

Lillian, Rochester: having a big cleanup on June 12th on the Rondout; had a wildflower walk last week; keeps website

John moved to adjourn, Hank seconded, all were in favor of adjourning at 9:00pm.