

Ulster County Environmental Management Council
Monthly Meeting, Howard C. St. John room, SUNY Ulster
August 31, 2011 6:30pm
Meeting Notes

Attendance:

Chair: Steve Noble

Municipal Representatives:

Virginia Starke, Hurley

John Sansalone, Gardiner

Joe Liuni, Rosendale

At-Large Members:

Bill More, Kingston

Julie Noble, Kingston

Hank Bartosik, Wawarsing

Guests:

Amanda LaValle, UC Dept. of Environment

Renno Budziak, Town of Ulster Planning Board

Call to Order and Welcome: Steve Noble called the meeting to order at 6:45pm. There was not quorum, however, so this was an informal meeting.

Minutes:

The May 25th, 2011 minutes were tabled until a future meeting with quorum.

Department of the Environment:

A 305 sq foot rain garden was planted today at 17 Pearl Street, the office of the Department of the Environment, and Amanda shared pictures of the entire process. They took the down spouts from the building and diverted them from a storm drain and directed them to a garden. There is a Green Infrastructure grant with multiple stakeholders in the Hudson Valley and a landscape architect, Barbara Restaino donated her design expertise and a number of funders provided plants. The buildings and grounds crew did the excavation, downspout diversion and placement of rock and soil. The plants were put in and it will then be mulched. This is going to be a demonstration garden and there are programs being held during Creek Week to spotlight this process: September 20, at the garden site and September 22 at the County Office Building. Two years ago a rain garden was put in at the Town of Ulster Town Hall, also one at the Senior Center in Saugerties and one at the Rosendale Library by the Master Gardeners at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County. This is the first rain garden on public property in Kingston. Steve Noble mentioned that the Kingston Parks and Recreation Department is funded to provide stormwater education to Kingston residents and as part of this has helped to fund this garden but also provides rain barrels to residents.

The Recreation Map for the County is now available in an interactive online mapping tool: REConnect. The Department of the Environment also now has a webpage off of the county website. To access either of these, go to the Ulster County home page (www.co.ulster.ny.us), then Departments, then Department of the Environment.

There have been about 60 site visits on the Lower Esopus in connection with LEWP (Lower Esopus Watershed Partnership) as part of an assessment of the damage to the creek, and there is a new publication: *A Journey Through Lower Esopus Creek* available now throughout the county.

Unfortunately, in the mountain towns of Ulster County there has been a large amount of damage that will greatly effect the watershed ecology. Amanda directed people to www.watershedpost.com for up to date info. The county website also posts closed county roads and bridges. There was a discussion about the

accuracy of existing flood maps and about what might be done to more accurately reflect true conditions and modeling. There was also a discussion about the local reservoirs and their capacities.

Old Business:

Creek Week (September 17-25): Aaron Bennett has been working diligently on this event, with publicity and registration. Amanda distributed literature listing events that are happening. Many of the events are also listed in the Hudson Valley Ramble and online at ucenvironment.org.

June CAC Roundtable Event: Scott Cuppitt from NYS DEC Estuary Program spoke about water resources. Amanda has copies of the report that he presented. The number of attendees was lower than the first roundtable and a discussion ensued about increasing attendance in the future. It was suggested that perhaps the CAC survey could be conducted again to see what municipal committees are working on. Suggestions for the next roundtable included focusing on water resources, in light of the recent flooding. Amanda mentioned that perhaps CACs that are not attending the EMC monthly meetings might want more program or specific project oriented meetings. Joe mentioned that to involve planning and town boards we should address them in their venue to be the most effective, also to offer credits to boards. Perhaps the next Roundtable event could be in November or December, 2011.

Steve mentioned that NYSACC, NYSAEMC are hosting the 2011 Conference on the Environment, October 21-23, 2011 in Rensselaerville, and the theme is Planning for a Changing Environment. The State DOS is offering a host of planning programs related to the environment, and the second track is themed around adapting to and mitigating climate change, with programs by the DEC.

New Business:

Lillian Greene has resigned from the Rochester CAC and the Ulster County EMC and therefore there is a vacancy in the Secretary position. If there is anyone interested, please let Steve know.

Roundabout:

Bill More: Ulster County Health Department got a grant and is running lead remodelers programs for free for contractors for the summer. The course is free, but the certification does have a fee.

Renno Budziak: Town of Ulster is working on a logging ordinance, to protect water sources including vernal pools; the ordinance will be a great step towards creating a Wetlands Ordinance.

John Sansalone (Gardiner): The annual watershed conference of NYWEA (www.nywea.org) is September 15 and 16th in West Point. Gardiner is continuing to work on the Watershed Wetlands Law. They have grant money to hire someone to look at hydric soils and do some work. This is a two year process and they will be hosting public info sessions.

Hank Bartosik (Wawarsing): There will be a creek walk on the Ver Nooy Kill. The town of Rochester is thinking of doing an analysis of the water to see if there are any living creatures. Hank asked about pharmaceutical traces in water and NYC's concern with it. John mentioned that certain chemicals are excreted by pass through, pass through treatment plants, and leaching through septic systems, especially estrogen and some water bodies are becoming affected. Even parts per trillion can have a large effect. Hank will not be able to attend the September meeting.

Virginia Starke (Hurley): The Open Space planning is on halt. They are working on collecting turbidity data from the Esopus Creek on an ongoing basis using Secchi disks. Amanda mentioned that she will share the info with the Ashokan Release working group. It was noted that the level of turbidity can have a large impact on not only the local ecosystem but also on recreation.

Julie Noble (Kingston): Kingston is continuing to work on their Climate Action Plan. The Climate Analyst Rich Schiafo is collecting all of the emissions data and is going to enter that all into the ICLEI software that the city is now a member of. Steve Noble is chairing the Climate Smart and Green Jobs Taskforce to move forward the plan, an adaptations plan, and a green innovation strategy. The CAC has started the process of creating a Natural Resources Inventory for Kingston. They are gathering data and using Rosendale's NRI map as a guide. The CAC is also going to create a Green Guide for Kingston, modeled after the Woodstock Green Guide.

Joe Liuni (Rosendale): Jennifer will update the Creek Week event data; they will be hosting a movie event on September 20th. The Sportsman Federation will also be offering a fishing event at Onteora Lake. He is staying up to date on the happenings at Williams Lake. Bruce Duffy, a Sportsman at Trout Unlimited and a very involved environmental advocate, passed away recently. Bruce was also a previous member of the Ulster County EMC. Joe also mentioned that the devastation to Rosendale due to the flooding from Irene was worse than he's ever seen, will forward pictures to Amanda.

October 15th, 8:00-2:00: Pharmaceuticals and e-waste can be brought to the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency for free at the Household Hazardous Waste Day. Appointments are required.

John moved, Hank seconded to adjourn. Meeting adjourned 8:53pm.

Submitted by Julie Noble