

**Ulster County Legislature
Environmental Committee
P.O. Box 1800
Kingston, New York
County Office Building, Legislative Library**

**April 16, 2008
6:00 PM**

Call to order:

6:05, Brian Shapiro, Chair

Present:

Brian Shapiro, Chairman; Richard A. Parete; Gary Bischoff; Dean Fabiano; Laura Petit; Kevin Roberts; Amanda LaValle, Ulster County Department of the Environment (DoEnv); Michael Bemis, UCRRA; Dennis Doyle, Planning; Miriam Strouse, secretary

Guests:

Mark Paisley, Taylor Biomass; James W. Taylor, Jr., Taylor Biomass; Jill Gruber, Hudson Valley Materials Exchange; Melissa Everett, Ulster County Global Warming Advisory Committee, Sustainable Hudson Valley; Dietrich Werner, Ulster County Railroad Advisory Board (Chair)

Agenda:

Open Space [Plan] Partnership
Taylor Biomass presentation
Hudson Valley Materials Exchange
Ulster County Railroad Advisory Board
Global Warming Advisory Committee
Recycling Oversight Committee appointments
Lower Esopus River Watch payment

Open Space [Plan] Partnership:

Dennis Doyle brought a resolution to begin the implementation of the Open Space Plan by authorizing the Legislative Chairman to form the Open Space Partnership. The formation of the Partnership was designated a priority implementation step in the Plan's recommendations. The Partnership will represent diverse stakeholders and institutions, and, like the Ulster County Transportation Council, will make decisions by consensus. The membership term will one year; the number of members is not defined. This resolution will also come before the Economic Development Committee before going to the Legislature. For detailed duties and responsibilities of the partnership, see attached pdf, pp 7-8. The full Plan can be viewed at <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/planning/ospace.shtml#doc>.

Taylor Biomass:

Following up on last month's interest in their pioneering work, Mark Paisley and James W. Taylor, Jr., of Taylor Biomass gave a presentation on the gasification of solid waste into "a medium-Btu gas that allows economical production of electricity without combustion and with an ash discharge approximately 10% of the incoming waste stream. The energy produced is *renewable, clean and non-polluting*". (my italics) (Quotation from Taylor website: see <http://www.taylorbiomassenergy.com/>. Website also has abundant technical information about the process.)

Kevin Roberts asked whether there was sufficient waste available to feed the equipment, which is designed to run uninterrupted. The Taylor representative replied that Orange County already generates significantly more than minimum waste needed to feed the process per day.

In the USA, two plants are in the planning stages in Montgomery, NY, and Florida. Worldwide, 50-100 plants are in exploratory talks. Five to seven plants are possible in the Hudson Valley. With many plants in a region, waste from a plant closed for repairs or maintenance could be diverted to another.

Brian Shapiro was inquired about the toxicity of the process. Mr. Paisley explained that, because gasification excludes air, it does not produce significant amounts of dangerous Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) or Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). Also, any HCl produced is removed by scrubbers, and NO_x are removed by scrubbers to about 50% of the legal level. Furthermore, when burned, the gas produced by the process produces less CO than natural gas. The ash residue is carbon-free silica, and can be used in concrete.

Hudson Valley Materials Exchange:

Jill Gruber, Director, explained that, following the Port Authority's acquisition of Stewart Airport, the Hudson Valley Materials Exchange (HVME) has been evicted from its warehouse there. After fifteen years of institutional stability, HVME is nearly bankrupt and is urgently looking for a home. They are exploring a lease agreement with the Town of New Paltz for a site, next to the New Paltz recycling center, which already has electricity. HVME has a DEC/HREP grant which could offset 50% of the costs at the site. HVME hopes to sign a lease in time to re-open in June.

Brian Shapiro introduced Jill to Amanda LaValle, and also asked Jill what HVME needs from Ulster County. Jill responded that HVME could use legal and technical support, and will keep the county informed. Charles Bemis mentioned that he has an unused office trailer available that could be used by HVME.

Ulster County Railroad Advisory Board:

Dietrich Werner introduced himself as the new chair of the railroad board, and identified himself as an environmentalist. He wants to work closely with the DoEnv and the Environmental Committee. He requested the committee's recommendations for weed control along the Catskill Mountain Railroad's (Catskill RR) Right of Way (ROW). Brian Shapiro responded that the Committee was concerned with the herbicide use on the ROW, but has no policy yet. The County Attorney's opinion is that, in addition to posting signs, the Catskill RR must abide by the 48 hour notice rule. It must also comply with any local laws.

Amanda LaValle reported that Ulster County is seeking grant money which would be used, in part, to repair the section of the railroad track in Boiceville which is falling into the Esopus Creek.

Rich Parete informed Dietrich about a small county-owned parcel, off Route 28 near the Hickory BBQ restaurant, which could be retained by the county and converted to a parking lot to serve the railroad. General discussion followed of developing parallel trails within the railroad's ROW.

Global Warming Advisory Committee (GWAC):

After acknowledging the committee's work, Melissa Everett summarized the proposed energy policy for Ulster County, which will be presented to the County Legislature on May 7. GWAC recommends a politically and fiscally prudent approach to reducing the county's carbon footprint. Building on the facilities study,

and UCAT's leadership, the county should join ICLEI, and use its audit methods to implement a comprehensive plan. Technical support is available from Kristen Marcell, the DEC's local climate change expert, who is familiar with energy audit programs.

Amanda LaValle and Melissa Everett discussed the plan's scope, and the role of the Department of the Environment in coordinating its implementation.

Brian Shapiro asked Melissa to work with Amanda LaValle to frame a timeline and a work plan based on the committee's recommendations. He will make the draft Energy Policy resolution an agenda item at the May Environmental Committee meeting. Gary Bischoff suggested making the proposed policy stronger by making it an actual law.

Recycling Oversight Committee:

Brian Shapiro reported that the Recycling Oversight committee has new prospective representatives from the UCEMC, SUNY-New Paltz, and the Rosendale Municipal Recycling Center. He proposed, and Laura Petit seconded, a resolution to approve these appointments. The resolution, which was co-sponsored by the entire committee, passed unanimously.

Lower Esopus River Watch:

Laura Petit proposed, and Richard Parete seconded, a draft resolution to pay approximately \$58,000 for past due contractual services billed by Lower Esopus River Watch. After discussion, the resolution passed 4-2.

Adjourn:

Brian Shapiro proposed, and Dean Fabiano seconded, a resolution to adjourn at 8:20, which was approved unanimously.

