

COUNTY OF ULSTER

P.O. BOX 1800
KINGSTON, NEW YORK 12402

Environmental Committee:

Brian Shapiro, Chairman
Gary Bischoff
Dean J. Fabiano
Richard A. Parete
Laura Petit
Kevin Roberts
Hector Rodriguez



Environmental Committee County Office Building, Legislative Library 6:00 PM, 5/21/08 - Minutes

Call to order:

6:05, Brian Shapiro, Chair

Present:

Brian Shapiro, Chairman; Gary Bischoff; Richard A. Parete; Laura Petit; Hector Rodriguez

Guests:

Amanda LaValle, Coordinator, Ulster County Department of the Environment (DoE); Martin J. Reisinger, Deputy Coordinator, DoE; John Maylie, Chair, UC Environmental Management Council (EMC); Pete Robbins, Marbletown ECC; Dave Holden, Woodstock; Ryan Lennon, SUNY-UCCC student; Mary McNamara; Lower Esopus Watershed Partnership, Sawkill Watershed Alliance; Candace Balmer, Lower Esopus Watershed Partnership (LEWP); Melissa Everett, UC Global Warming Advisory Committee Chair; Miriam Strouse, secretary, DoE

Agenda:

Department of the Environment
Environmental Management Council
Youth Education
Lower Esopus Watershed Partnership
Open Space Plan (OSP)/Natural Resources Inventory (NRI)
[Bigger Better] Bottle Bill
Tibet
Global Warming Advisory Committee
Public comment

Department of the Environment:

Amanda LaValle introduced Martin J. Reisinger, the Department's new Deputy Coordinator, referring to his background in both state and local government, which includes work in energy conservation and recycling.

Amanda LaValle reported on current DOE projects:

- The public meeting on the draft 2007 MS4 (stormwater) annual report was held on May 19, and the final report will be filed by June 1.
- The Phoenicia grant application will be ready to go to the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC) next week.
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The DEC's Hudson River Estuary Program (HREP) provides grants up to \$30,000 for open space planning activities. HREP has encouraged Ulster County to apply for funding for our open space program. Ulster County would need to provide a 25% match. However, in-kind services, including salary, and some administrative costs could be used to meet the match requirement. A resolution "Authorizing The Chairman Of The Ulster County Legislature To Submit An[d] Application And Assurances For Hudson River Estuary Program Funding To The NYS Department Of Environmental Conservation (DEC) For Open Space Planning" was moved by Hector Rodriguez, seconded by Richard Parete, and approved unanimously. (See <http://www.ulstercountyny.gov/resolutions/0617.pdf>)

Brian Shapiro suggested that the development of the county energy policy should be referred back to the DOE and the Global Warming Advisory Committee. Martin Reisinger is currently working on the policy.

Environmental Management Council (EMC):

John Maylie reported current EMC actions on open space, EMC's internal governance (bylaw revision, charter impact), and MS4. He will be leaving the EMC in October, leaving a legacy of expanded town participation in the EMC. In addition, the City of Kingston and Plattekill are in the process of forming CAC's. Rich Parete initiated a discussion of the EMC membership, emphasizing the need to balance the number of town representatives with the appropriate number of at-large members.

Youth Education:

David Holden, Woodstock resident and long-time land steward, brought forward the urgent need for environmental education for Ulster County's youth. Referring to Richard Louv's thesis from *Last Child in the Woods* (<http://richardlouv.com/>), he sees uninvolved youth who are "stuck in screens". He fears that the next generation will not care for the lands, including the Comeau property, that he, and others, have struggled to preserve. Subsequent discussion of local environmental education covered local and regional service learning, school, and

community based programs, specifically in the City of Kingston, as well as the environmental education database being built by DoE. In particular, the Nobles are implementing “no child left inside” through low-cost place-based education for Kingston’s youth.

http://www.cbf.org/site/PageServer?pagename=act_sub_actioncenter_federal_nclb_support, particularly “What Has NCLB Done to Environmental Education?”

Further discussion reviewed the history of youth participation in the EMC and several towns’ CAC’s, and led Brian Shapiro to acknowledge Ryan Lennon, the UCCC freshman.

Lower Esopus Watershed Partnership

Mary McNamara and Candace Balmer reported the recent activities of the Lower Esopus Watershed Partnership (LEWP), which links the seven Lower Esopus Watershed communities of Hurley, Marbletown, Olive, Saugerties Town, Village of Saugerties, Ulster and the City of Kingston. In cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers and Ulster County Soil and Water, using funding from the DEC’s Hudson River Estuary Program, LEWP’s Lower Esopus Watershed Management and Stewardship Project is developing recommendations for watershed and stream corridor stewardship in this flood prone stream corridor.

(http://www.rcapsolutions.org/casestudies/RCAP_CaseStudy_NY_LowerEsopusWatershed.pdf)

In closing, they quoted local experts who connect the dots between land use and flooding:

- William Nechamen from NYS DEC (see below) says that if you’re building in the floodplain, you’re building in the river!
- David Strayer, Senior Scientist at the Institute of Ecosystem Studies, says that rain alone is not the only cause of flooding.

They also announced a free informal workshop on flooding **Tuesday, June 10, 2008: 6:00 - 9:00 pm on Floodplain Mapping and Management featuring** William Nechamen from NYS DEC will speak on recent floodplain remapping and related local municipal regulations; Ira Stern, of NYC DEP, on flood mitigation capability and strategies of NYC DEP Water Supply Reservoirs, Army Corps of Engineers report on the recently completed Reconnaissance Studies of Rondout/Wallkill and Esopus Creeks; with Joe Damrath, senior environmental analyst for the NYC DEP in the value of wetlands and riparian buffers in flood mitigation. The individual presentations will be followed by a question and answer session and interactive discussion. DEC flood management staff and Art Snyder, Director of Ulster County Emergency Communications/Emergency Management, will be on hand as resource people to join the panel and help answer questions. Free and open to all. People who live or have a business near a creek or stream or in a floodplain are strongly encouraged to attend. Sponsored by Sawkill Watershed Alliance, Rondout Creek Watershed Council, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, and others. For more information contact victor@clearwater.org 845-454-7673 x 112 and see attached flyers.

Brian Shapiro requested that LEWP continue reporting to the Environmental Committee.

Open Space Plan (OSP)/Natural Resources Inventory (NRI):

Amanda LaValle recently met with Laura Heady, biodiversity expert at the DEC's HREP, to discuss developing Ulster County's NRI and creating a publicly accessible platform on the county's website, similar to the existing parcel viewer, for displaying this data. Brian Shapiro and Amanda discussed the linkages between planning for biodiversity conservation, open space protection, farm protection, and economic development. Brian Shapiro, Hector Rodriguez, and Gary Bischoff discussed real estate transfer fees and bonding, two funding mechanisms for open space funding. It was noted that the recent open space bond resolutions were designed to provide seed money, not 100% funding, for land acquisition. Brian Shapiro referred to a poll by the Trust for Public Land that assessed how county residents might be willing to fund open space initiatives. (<http://www.tpl.org/>)

[Bigger Better] Bottle Bill:

Brian Shapiro introduced a resolution "Urging The New York State Legislature To Update New York's Bottle Bill" which, with Governor Patterson's support, has a good chance of becoming state law. Richard A. Parete moved the resolution, which was seconded by Hector Rodriguez and approved unanimously. See <http://www.ulstercountyny.gov/resolutions/0628.pdf>
Background information: <http://www.nypirg.org/enviro/bottlebill/default.html>
Bigger Better Bottle Bill Excluded From New York State Budget:
<http://media.www.sbstatesman.com/media/storage/paper955/news/2008/05/08/News/Bigger.Better.Bottle.Bill.Excluded.From.New.York.State.Budget-3367028.shtml>

Tibet:

Brian Shapiro entered into the record a letter of appreciation from the Office of Tibet regarding the county's April 9, 2008 "Resolution No. 128 Supporting The U.S. Department Of State's Position On Events In Tibet". See <http://www.ulstercountyny.gov/resolutions/128-08.pdf>

Global Warming Advisory Committee (GWAC):

Melissa Everett, committee chair, reviewed the committee's key suggestions to Ulster County:

- Implement the facilities study
- Create a financing mechanism
- Update renovation guidelines similar to the county's new construction guidelines
- Focus on transportation

Martin Reisinger at the Department of the Environment will continue developing a county policy.

Pete Robbins is seeking information and support to develop institutional food waste composting within the county. Mohonk Mountain House already provides a model for food waste composting.

Adjourn:

Richard Parete moved the motion, which was seconded by Laura Petit, and approved unanimously.