

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
6:00 PM, 9/17/08 – Minutes
Library Conference Room, 6th floor
Ulster County Office Building
244 Fair Street, Kingston, NY**

Call to order:

6:00, Brian Shapiro, Chair

Present:

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

Guests:

Michael Bemis, UCRRA; Dr. John Harrington, The Solar Energy Consortium (TSEC); Bea Havranek, Ulster County Attorney; Amanda LaValle, Ulster County (UC) Department of the Environment; Meg Maisch; John Maylie, Environmental Management Council (EMC); Vic Melville; Je'nae Potter; Jake Wedemeyer, Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Miriam Strouse, Ulster County Department of the Environment, recording secretary

Agenda:

Call to order

County Attorney's office report on recycling hearing officer, Bea Havranek, Esq.

Environmental Management Council (EMC), John Maylie
 The Solar Energy Consortium (TSEC), Dr. John Harrington
 Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (UCRRA), Michael Bemis
 UC Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Jake Wedemeyer
 Recycling Oversight Committee youth membership
 UC Department of the Environment, Amanda LaValle

New Business:

- Ulster County Federated Sportsmen representation to Region 3 Fish and Wildlife board, Richard Parete
- Open Space Partnership
- Support resolution for Belleayre Ski Center

Adjourn

Call to order:

Chairman Brian Shapiro called the meeting to order at 6:05PM.

County Attorney report on recycling hearing officer:

Bea Havranek, First Assistant County Attorney, presented an overview of the quasi-judicial role of **independent hearing officers** in other contexts within the County, such as civil service law administration.

She recommended hiring an objective fact finder, versus someone with an environmental background, as most of the work is procedural and not particularly content related. As a cost saving measure, she suggested finding an attorney, already on the county payroll, to hire on an hourly or per diem basis. She also stated that there are local attorneys in private practice with relevant experience, and mentioned a few names. She emphasized the value of hiring a **court stenographer** for all such hearings, despite an additional daily cost of \$1,200 to \$2,000. If a case ever moved into the State Supreme Court system through an Article 78 appeal process, a stenographer's transcript of the proceeding would be essential. In response to a query about the **scope of the County's recycling enforcement authority**, Bea Havranek referred to Section 19: Enforcement, in *Local Law Number 8 Of 2007, ULSTER COUNTY MANDATORY SOURCE SEPARATION AND RECYCLING LAW* (see <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/resolution-archives/2007/LL%20No.%208%20of%202007.pdf> . Brian Shapiro thanked Attorney Havranek for contributing her expertise after hours, and she excused herself. Chairman Shapiro reviewed the **next steps**, and the Committee agreed to ask Atty. Havranek to contact the District Attorney's and Public Defender's offices. Dean Fabiano will also contact the DA's office. Brian Shapiro will stay in touch with Michael Bemis, and the Committee will revisit this topic at its October meeting.

Environmental Management Council

John Maylie, Chairman, gave a status report on **CACs and EMC membership**. He reported that 13 of Ulster County's 24 municipalities have Conservation Advisory Councils (CACs), and that the City of Kingston and Plattekill are in the process of forming CACs. The 28 member EMC now includes 13 town representatives, 13 at large members, and 2 ex-officio members.

John had hoped to see the three towns which passed open space bond initiatives last year represented in the Ulster County **Open Space [Plan] Partnership**. Of these, New Paltz and Gardiner, but not Marbletown, are represented among the partnership nominees.

The EMC is entering a **transitional period**. John Maylie will be stepping down as Chairman, but has offered to continue as Vice Chairman. Steve Noble has volunteered to become the new Chairman, and is expected to be elected at the September 24 EMC meeting. Assessing his tenure with the EMC, John reported some satisfaction with recruiting and retaining new members, which he attributed to, among other things, offering timely and relevant presentations at meetings, providing informative minutes, and [*reaching out to recruit new members –MS*]. Brian Shapiro responded to John's final report by thanking him for his service to the County.

The Solar Energy Consortium (TSEC):

Dr. John Harrington, Vice President of Research and Development, reported on **TSEC's recent activities** to create a solar industry in New York. **Prism Solar Technologies**, which came to Ulster County in April, 2008, is temporarily housed (along with TSEC) at FALA Technologies, where they have set up laser die cutting equipment. Prism has received approximately \$1,000,000 in federal assistance to purchase equipment, and is looking for a permanent location. See <http://www.prismsolar.com/>.

A Hungarian-based firm will be setting up a solar thin films production facility in Ulster County within the next six to eight months. They expect to be hiring 20-70 people within the first six months to a year of operations.

Elsewhere in Ulster County, TSEC worked with SUNY-New Paltz engineering students to pilot a model **energy audit** for local vegetable and **apple farmers** at Wright Farm in Gardiner. TSEC is seeking additional **grant funding** for this project, which, with assistance from Cornell Cooperative, could be used as a template for similar farmers throughout New York. Responding to Brian Shapiro's query how the

Committee could support their application, Dr. Harrington said that TSEC would welcome a **letter of support for the farm project**. He and Brian agreed to stay in touch before the grant's January 7, 2009 application deadline.

Through TSEC, a new team of New Paltz students is currently performing **energy audits of two local lighting systems**. In Ulster County, the students are auditing Kingston Hospital's parking facilities. Nearby, in Orange County, they are auditing the military's hangars at Stewart Airport, which pay over \$1,000,000 annually to light these buildings 24/7.

In Western New York, TSEC assisted in **negotiations** with the Empire State Development Authority and the Power Authority of New York (PASNY) that are **resulting in the renovation of two old steel plants** near Niagara Falls by Globe Metal Specialties, whose projects at these plants will generate 300 to 400 new jobs.

TSEC is partnering with Rochester Institute of Technology, and is seeking **grant funding** through the federal Department of Energy's Energy Frontier Research Center. See <http://www.er.doe.gov/bes/EFRC.html>.

Brian Shapiro thanked Dr. Harrington for his report, and invited him to return at any time. Hector Rodriguez mentioned that TSEC will also be presenting to the Economic Development Committee next month, and thanked Dr. Harrington for providing the Legislature with "a lot of exposure for TSEC".

See the June 2008 Environmental Committee minutes for background on TSEC.

UCRRA report

Michael Bemis reported that on 9/17/08, after a public hearing, the Agency's **2009 budget** was approved. Also, UCCRA recently received over \$20,000 as a "records retention" grant to microfiche its records.

The Agency has also reassessed its **electronic waste (e-waste) recycling** program, and will now be working with Supreme Asset Management and Recovery (SAMR), a New Jersey based-company, "with more than 15 years of experience in the IT asset management solutions industry." SAMR not only "recycle[s] EOL [End Of Life] electronics with full government compliance" but also "remove[s] sensitive data off your hard drives safely and securely." (Quotes from <http://www.samrecovery.com>.)

UCRRA's next **household hazardous waste and electronic waste collection** is scheduled for October 11. **Preregistration is required**. For details, contact <http://www.ucrra.org/recycling/hhw.htm> or call (845) 336-3336.

Michael Bemis, UCRRA (the Agency) Executive Director, emphasized that the Agency has renewed its commitment to recycling by strengthening its **recycling education program**. Throughout the next five months, the Agency's recycling educator will focus on increasing recycling awareness and compliance at 80 Ulster County schools. Referring to the earlier discussion of recycling enforcement, Mr. Bemis reiterated that he had heard the Committee's concerns re rolling out a schedule to **transition** from recycling education **towards a combination of education and enforcement**.

Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District:

Jake Wedemeyer presented a report from Executive Director Gary Capella on **recent Ulster County SWCD activities**. The report highlighted four projects: summer 2008's MS4 storm drain stenciling program, the Esopus Creek demonstration project in Shandaken, a manure storage project at a Rochester dairy farm, and the prototype mobile grass pelletizer project. (See attached for detailed project descriptions.) For enabling legislation for the Esopus Creek project, see <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/resolutions/367-07.pdf>

Recycling Oversight Committee membership:

Laura Petit introduced Je'Nae Potter, a high school student from Saugerties, who circulated a letter detailing her interest in and qualifications to serve as the **youth representative on the Recycling Oversight Committee**. The Committee interviewed Je'Nae, and Gary Bischoff welcomed her interest in promoting cloth bags as an alternative to plastic bags. He invited her to attend the plastic bag subcommittee, which, conveniently, meets in Saugerties. Mr. Bischoff next made a motion, seconded by Dean Fabiano, to appoint Je'nae as an at-large representative to the Recycling Oversight Committee. The motion was passed unanimously.

Laura Petit will inform Je'Nae when the resolution to appoint her is placed on the Legislature's agenda, so that she can attend and be introduced to the Legislators.

The Committee also agreed to offer a **seat on the Global Warming Advisory Committee** to Phoenix Rodden, the Kingston High School student who had requested consideration for appointment to the Recycling Oversight Committee.

Ulster County Department of the Environment (DoEnv):

Amanda LaValle, Coordinator, reported the status of the Energy Policy and the Environmental Plan.

The **Energy Plan**, which was first reviewed by the Committee in June, is in its final draft stage. The plan has been enhanced by free support from the US Department of

Energy's Technical Assistance Program (TAP), whose experts advise state and local governments on "renewable energy and energy efficiency policies and programs." The Coordinator distributed a flyer about TAP (See attached.) TAP's expertise includes energy performance contracting*, one type of third party agreement option the county is exploring.

Amanda LaValle distributed copies of the draft **Environmental Plan**, and reviewed the Plan's four program areas:

- Department establishment & development
- Stormwater
- Sustainability initiatives
- Natural resources

Laura Petit asked if the Department needed any assistance detailing the program areas' goals and objectives. She specifically mentioned supporting the Global Warming Advisory Committee, the Recycling Oversight Committee, and the DoEnv's website development. Amanda LaValle responded that the Department of the Environment will convene a task area working group, comprised of employees of the coordinated departments, for each program area. Those task area working groups will be soliciting interested groups for information and expertise.

The Department of the Environment has worked closely with the coordinated departments to develop a plan that is both ambitious and realistically implementable. The Coordinator invited comments on the plan. Brian Shapiro encouraged Committee members to make reviewing the plan a priority, and to email comments to Amanda LaValle in timely manner. This would permit her to respond to their comments before the next Environmental Committee meeting.

Fish & Wildlife board:

Richard Parete reported from the NYS DEC Region 3 Fish & Wildlife board, on which he serves as Ulster County's legislative representative. Ulster, Sullivan, Westchester, Putnam, Orange, Dutchess, and Rockland Counties are each represented on the board by a landowner, a legislative representative, and a member of Federated Sportsmen. Mr. Parete asked for, and received permission from Brian Shapiro, to invite Joe Liuni to fill Ulster County's vacant Federated Sportsmen seat. If he accepts the nomination, the County Legislature would need to approve his appointment.

Open Space Partnership:

Resolution No. 265, appointing members to the Ulster County Open Space

Partnership, was referred back to committee at the September 10 legislative session. Hector Rodriguez moved, and Dean Fabiano seconded, the motion to approve the Partnership's members. After a brief discussion of the appointment process, the motion was approved unanimously. For Resolution No. 265, see <http://www.ulstercountyny.gov/resolutions/265-08.pdf>.

Belleayre Ski Center support resolution:

Brian Shapiro introduced a *Resolution urging supportive funding from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation for the Belleayre Ski Center*.

Hector Rodriguez moved, and Laura Petit seconded, to open discussion of the resolution. After brief discussion, the resolution to the DEC passed unanimously. (See <http://www.ulstercountyny.gov/resolutions/324-08.pdf>)

Adjourn:

Brian Shapiro made a motion, seconded by Hector Rodriguez, to adjourn. The motion was approved unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.

*“Energy Performance Contracting is an innovative financing technique that uses cost savings from reduced energy consumption to repay the cost of installing energy conservation measures.”

(See <http://www.huduser.org/publications/hsgfin/energy.html>)