

# Broome County Environmental Management Council

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## Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC) Notes from the meeting held Thursday, April 5, 2007 United Way Board Room, Jensen Road, Vestal, NY

### Present:

**Members-at-Large:** Bill Heaviside, André LaClair, Tony Lubzanski, Mary Cronk and Karen Ciatyk

**CAC Reps:** Cindy Westerman (Vestal)

**Staff/Intern:** Stacy Merola and Beth Egitto

**Associates:** Terry Woodnorth

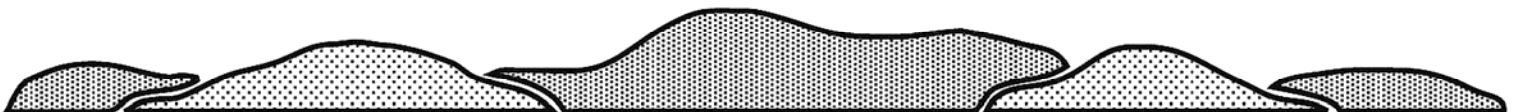
**Visitors:** Chris Berger, Julia Hoover, Jerrine Wyman, Aaron Phelps, Jason Johnson and Erin Heard

**Absent with Excuse:** Melanie Feltmate, Christina Prete, Kevin Mathers, Doug Garner, and Ron Keibel.

1. Following introductions, Andre **convened** the meeting at **7:05 pm**. Mary moved to approve the minutes from March with the following amendments: Under Staff and Chair Reports change "Clear" to "Cleary". The motion was seconded by Cindy and approved by all.

### 2. Privilege of the Floor/Announcements/Member Items of Interest

- "Seminar on Sustainability using the Natural Step Framework" featuring Terry Gipps, Adjunct Professor at Minneapolis College of Art and Design, President of the Alliance for Sustainability, and CEO of Sustainability Associates. Sponsored by BCK Architects & Engineers, Binghamton Neighborhood Assemblies and others. Wednesday, April 18 9am-5pm. Advanced registration required by April 13. Contact Jerrine Wyman (607-372-8473) or Emily Garvilla (607-372-8266).
- The Volunteer Sign-up sheet for 2007 EMC special events was circulated. The Joyce KL Smith Environmental Photography Show & Competition Opening Reception will be Wed, May 9 at the BC Library from 5:30 – 7:30 pm. The event is free and open to the public. EMC volunteers are needed to bring treats and mingle with guests.
- There will be an Earth Day celebration at Binghamton University on Friday, April 20. The event is free.
- Terry noted that the St. James Peace & Justice Council will hold a free Earth Day Fair Sat, April 21 beginning at 10am at St James Church in Johnson City. Chris Burger will lead two workshops; Chip will also participate.
- The Al Hazzard Chapter of Trout Unlimited presents an Earth Day Delaware River Cleanup at the Village of Deposit's Fireman's Park in Sat. April 28, 9am – 1 pm (rain date May 5), and the 2007 Kids Fishing Day, Sat. May 12, 9am to 1pm at Chenango Valley State Park. Cost is \$2 per person for the fishing derby, which includes lunch and fly fishing lessons. Pre-register by calling 648-5251.
- EMC Associate Member, Duke Holdsworth, will have his photography display "Photographic Visions" at the Anam Cara Art Gallery at 204 State Street. The opening reception will be held during First Friday, April 6 from 6-9pm. All are invited and welcome.
- Peebles Island State Park and Resource Center Annual Open House- Saturday, May 19, 11am-4pm. The park is located at the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers in Waterford, near Albany.
- The Binghamton University Center for Integrated Watershed Studies is hosting a symposium/workshop called "The Role of Science in Watershed Management" May 21 & 22 at the BU campus. Three keynote speakers will discuss flooding, non-point source pollution, land-use impact and policies, environmental education, emerging issues, and stakeholder concerns and participation in breakout sessions. Registration required (\$\$) (<http://ciws.binghamton.edu/>).



- Reps from NYS Dept of Health (DOH), NYS Dept of Envi Conservation (DEC), the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and BC Heath Dept will be available to answers questions about the NYSDOH's Endicott Health Statistics Review Follow-up and NIOSH's Endicott IBM Workers Feasibility Study at a public availability session at Union-Endicott HS April 17 from 4-8pm. A 60-day comment period ends May 28.
- Melanie reported earlier to EMC staff that Binghamton University officially joined 539 other schools in the Campus Climate Challenge, a project of youth organizations throughout the U.S. and Canada that leverages the power of young people to organize on college campuses and high schools across Canada and the U.S. to win 100% Clean Energy policies at their schools. The Challenge is growing a generation-wide movement to stop global warming, by reducing the pollution from high schools and colleges down to zero, and leading society to a clean energy future.
- The State Senate recently confirmed Governor Eliot Spitzer's nominee for Commissioner of the NYSDEC, State Assemblyman Pete Grannis.
- Cindy will give a talk, "Timbuktu and the Rivers of West Africa", at the Sierra Club meeting on April 17 at 7:30pm at the Central United Methodist Church in Endicott. She will speak about the landscape, people and wildlife that she encountered on a recent trip to West Africa, as well as the environmental problems facing that area.
- Andre reminded everyone that the Cornell Ornithology Lab will be hosting Christie Todd Whitman, former head of the EPA, as part of their Monday Night Seminar series April 23 at 7:30pm in Statler Hall on the Cornell campus. She will speak about issues confronting environmental protection and conservation from the unique perspective of having led the EPA for four years.

### **3. Special Guest: Jerrine Wyman, Beautification Coordinator, Binghamton Neighborhood Assemblies**

To honor his campaign promise, Mayor Ryan began looking at models from other areas to involve citizens in government decision making. The neighborhood assembly concept was the most promising, allowing residents to take responsibility for and establish pride in their neighborhoods. The first time the Assemblies came together was in early 2006. Each neighborhood met to identify concerns and solutions. However, without a support structure, the groups fizzled out. The Mayor's Office, along with Binghamton University and Citizen Action wrote a grant to get financial support for the Assemblies with which the City hired VISTA volunteers through the Corp for National Community Service. These consisted of three community organizers, one beautification coordinator, one media coordinator, one small business coordinator, one racial justice coordinator and one research and training coordinator. With this additional support the Assemblies were reenergized.

As Beautification Coordinator, Jerrine is working with the Neighborhood Assemblies on several greening projects. Issues that are being addressed include greenspace, littering and blight. Funds from the Restore NY grant program are being used for demolition or rehabilitation of vacant buildings. A Neighborhood Inventory Assessment Tool is being used to identify problems with public infrastructure and private properties that may benefit from the use of Restore NY funds. On April 14 there will be a citywide cleanup and on a date and place yet to be determined, there will be an Honor the Earth Tree Planting with trees donated by BC Soil and Water CD. Jerrine circulated a description of the program and a list of upcoming events (<http://dnn.cityofbinghamton.com>). There was a brief discussion about greening projects as well as suggestions for other projects and potential partnerships. Stacy mentioned that the Neighborhood Assemblies are similar to CACs. The City had a CAC in the past and this might be a good time to form one again. She gave Jerrine additional information about CACs.

### **4. Committee Reports:**

**Natural Resources Committee (NRC)** - Met Thursday, March 15 at 4:30 pm, BCOB. The main topic of discussion was the Open Space Plan. The NRC reviewed Cindy's "*Protected Open Space*" section and

Bills “*Historic Open Space*” portion of the “*Distinctive Character*” section. So far, the *Introduction* is complete and five parts of the *Description and Inventory of Resources* are complete or in draft form. Stacy noted that James Bryden and Roger Luther developed a website identifying NYS physical and natural landmarks as a project of the American Institute of Architects Southern NY Component. They may offer valuable input for the *Distinctive Character* section. In May, they will have an exhibit highlighting local landmarks at the BC Library. Next NRC meeting is Thursday, May 17 @ 4:30pm. Prior to the meeting at 4pm the BC Planning Dept & EMC staff will hold a public meeting for Broome County’s Stormwater Management Plan Annual Report.

**Recycling & Waste Management Committee (RWMC)** – Met Monday, March 26 at 4:30 pm, BCOB. Discussion topics included Division of Solid Waste Management (DSMW) recycling awareness outreach activities including green schools (NYS Go-Green Initiative) and backyard composting, and increased outreach to landfill users about covered loads, a BC Landfill Timber Management Plan, and a request for plastic cup recycling at the BC Arena (DSWM will ask Arena about pursuing corn-based plastic cups). The RWMC also received several updates about various corporate plastic bag recycling and reuse initiatives, among other things.

A major topic of discussion was the status of the proposed Bigger Better Bottle Bill. At the time of the RWMC meeting there was no bill in Albany on the table, however Gov. Spitzer included it as a funding source for the Environmental Protection Fund in his proposed budget, which was removed during budget negotiations. RWMC members agreed that the current Bottle Bill (the NYS Returnable Container Law) has been important for reducing beverage container litter, and the dramatic increase in use of single serving non-carbonated beverages (bottled water, sports drinks, etc.) warrants an expansion of the Bottle Bill to include these containers. Despite environmental benefits, many beverage vendors oppose expansion of the Bottle Bill due to the burden of handling additional containers. Chris suggested that as a compromise bulky large containers (i.e. 2-liter bottles and larger) be removed from the current Bottle Bill in exchange for the addition of less cumbersome small non-carbonated beverage containers. Larger containers typically used in the home are more readily recycled through curbside collection while smaller containers are used on-the-go, where there is not always an outlet for trash or recyclables.

**ACTION ITEM** – Chris drafted a letter to local representatives asking for support of a compromise in the NYS Bottle Bill. The letter asks to remove all 1.75-liter bottles and larger from the nickel deposit system in return for an expansion to include all non-carbonated single-serving beverage containers less than 1.75-liters. This sends a message to representatives to continue working on the issue. The action comes moved and seconded from the RWMC. Andre suggested inserting a statement in “*This may expand occasions for retailers and redemption centers to explore mutually beneficial business opportunities*” in the fifth paragraph. Terry moved, Cindy seconded, to include this amendment; motion to amend carried. All in favor of sending the letter carried. The letter will be modified and sent to local Assembly and Senate reps and majority leaders, as well as to Gov. Spitzer, among others.

Cindy requested that compact fluorescent bulb disposal be addressed by the RWMC. The push to switch from incandescent bulbs by groups and businesses to compact fluorescent bulbs poses a waste management issue in that the compact fluorescent bulbs must be disposed of as hazardous waste because they contain small amounts of mercury. Cindy and others would like to see take back programs in place similar to battery drop-offs at retail stores. They feel that it is not convenient to bring bulbs to the household hazardous waste facility at the landfill. Stacy will bring the issue to DSMW. There will likely be increased outreach about this topic at the annual Earth Day event.

Next meeting: Monday, May 26 @ 4:30pm or the RWMC will take a tour of the Delaware Co. Composting Facility May 23 in place of the regularly scheduled meeting that week.

**Membership Committee** - The Open House in March was a success. Twenty new faces were in attendance, and the Membership Committee received four applications for membership. Stacy sent membership packets to other individuals that could not attend the Open House, a few are students from high school and BCC.

Erin Heard's nomination for Member-at-Large seat comes moved and seconded from the Membership Committee. All in favor; action carried. Erin's name will be forwarded to the County Executive for approval and Legislative confirmation.

**5. Conservation Advisory Commission (CAC) Reports:**

Vestal – The CAC met Tues, March 27. Chip gave a presentation about stream management. The group discussed problems and solutions for streams in the Town as a result of a request by the Town Supervisor to address this issue. They are in the process of developing formal recommendations. The next meeting is Tues, April 24, Vestal Town Hall. Stacy noted that the Town Supervisor will forward a letter for Cindy's re-nomination to be the Vestal CAC rep on the EMC. Cindy's name will be forwarded along with Erin Heard's MAL nomination to the County Executive, etc.

**6. Staff & Chair Reports:**

- The County Executive's office forwarded a letter to the EMC from a young woman who is urging the County to take action regarding global warming. One of the suggestions was to form a group where citizens could meet monthly to discuss environmental issues. Stacy sent the author a membership packet to inform her about the EMC and encourage her to come to the table. Chris mentioned that his membership in the EMC began after he served on the County's Energy Commission. He mentioned that forming this group again might be a good way to address global warming issues at the county level.
- Kevin Mathers will give a talk about composting in Broome County at the May EMC meeting. Jim Bryden will talk about local historical and natural landmarks at the June meeting. Julia suggested a talk about geothermal energy. Stacy said there was a similar talk in the past but it may be a good topic again for the future. Julia Hoover also noted that Richard Branson (Virgin Airlines) has a challenge – he'll award \$25M to the person who can develop measures to remove CO2 from the atmosphere.

**7. The meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.**

**Next meeting:** Thurs., May 3 @ 7pm, United Way Board Room, Vestal.

Beth Egitto, Recorder  
Stacy Merola, Editor