

Broome County Environmental Management Council

Barbara J. Fiala, Broome County Executive



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Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC) Notes from the meeting held Thursday, April 7, 2011 Broome County Public Library, Court Street, Binghamton, NY

Present:

Members-at-Large: Tony Lubzanski, Erin Heard, and Bill Heaviside

CAC Reps: Cindy Westerman, Vestal

Ex-Officio Reps: Frank Evangelisti (BC Planning)

Staff: Beth Egitto, BC Planning

Other: Tarik Abdelazim, City of Binghamton Planning

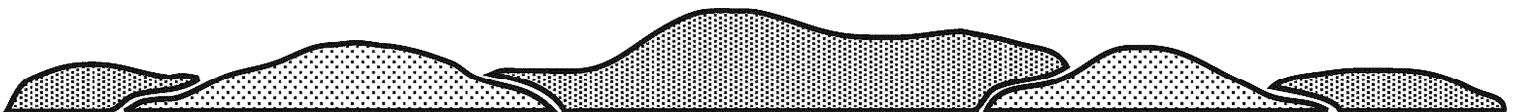
1. The meeting was **convened at 7:05 pm.**

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

- A Symposium on Energy in the 21st Century is being held Friday, April 8th at the Links at Erie Village in East Syracuse. More information can be found online at www.energy21symposium.org.
- BMTS recently updated their Bike Route Maps. These were distributed.
- Cindy noted that she planned to attend the New York State Wetlands Conference in Lake Placid. She also gave an update on a conference that she attended at Cornell about energy and environment issues related to hydrofracking. She noted that the presentations offered very well balanced information.
- Cindy brought up the issue of logging at Aqua-Terra Park. Recently, the County Legislature passed a resolution to expand an existing contract with Forestate. The original contract included the development of forest management plans for airport and landfill lands. The amendment of the contract would add County lands, specifically Hawkins Pond and Aqua-Terra. Cindy noted that the County had attempted to log Aqua-Terra in the mid-90's and this was met with strong opposition. Several community members that were involved in the previous effort against logging at Aqua-Terra, are quite upset and feel that there was no opportunity for public input. They also feel that the County should have a more comprehensive forest management plan in place, rather than to use a timber management plan. Beth noted that she had received emails regarding this issue and had looked into EMC records. At that time, the EMC had commented that logging should be postponed until larger policy questions had been resolved. Although there was analysis on the issue, it is unclear, based on the records, whether there was any legislative action taken either permitting or prohibiting logging at Aqua-Terra. Beth has brought the issue to the attention of those involved and is keeping abreast of developments. At this time, the contractor has not yet begun developing the forest management plan. Beth suggested that we wait to review the plan when it is developed and then decide whether to take action at that point. The group agreed that this would be a good course of action.

3. **Special Guest: Tarik Abdelazim, Livable Communities Alliance**

The Livable Communities Alliance is a small group of local agencies and organizations that work together toward the goal of promoting smart growth and livability and the associated development principles. Tarik Abdelazim, Director of Planning, Housing and Community Development at the City of Binghamton, is part of the group and came to discuss their goals, how organizations can participate and the upcoming symposium that they have organized on May 19th. There have been several developments recently at the state and federal levels that incorporate smart growth and livability principals into policies and programs, including the establishment of the NYS Office of Smart Growth and the availability of federal funding through the HUD program for regional sustainability planning. The LCA began as representatives from several local groups recognized the importance of smart growth locally and also that there were several organizations that were already working toward smart growth goals, but not



communicating in the same context, including transportation, health, local foods, planning, and others. The group recognized the importance for organization on a regional scale in order to create a more comprehensive plan for future development in a sustainable manner. The goal of the LCA is to facilitate discussion at a regional level on smart growth issues. The first event that the group held was a movie highlighting action that is being taken in Detroit related to smart growth issues, followed by a panel of local officials to discuss how the principles can be applied locally. Since then, LCA members have made several presentations throughout the community that have been met with a positive response. The next event that the group is holding is “Creating a Framework for Regional Prosperity: A Livable Communities and Smart Growth Symposium.” The group has arranged for presentation from nationally renowned experts, as well as individuals from the Upstate region that have implemented smart growth practices in their communities. The event is being held on May 19th at the Binghamton Riverwalk Hotel. More information is available on www.livablecommunitiesalliance.org. Tarik will send a Partner Endorsement Letter to the group in case the EMC would like to sign on as a partner with the Alliance. A brief question and answer period followed.

4. Committee and CAC items

- The Natural Resources Committee met on March 24th. Some items that were discussed included a public hearing on an ordinance to regulate Outdoor Wood Boilers in the Town of Dickinson and plans for a windmill at BCC. The group continued to discuss the Open Space Plan. Specifically, the group discussed making the formatting of individual sections more consistent, the need to update the information within the sections, and the use of maps in the plan.
- Cindy reported that the Vestal CAC met on March 17th. They discussed several items including a tour of the Rock Road Glen at Mittendorf Park and to discuss the forester that had been hired by the town to create a plan for the park. They also discussed the impacts of the Emerald Ash Borer and westward extension of the Rail Trail.

5. Resolution Approving EMC Sponsorship of Headwaters River Trail Network’s Susquehanna Sojourn

At the March meeting the group discussed the upcoming Susquehanna Sojourn, a weekend boating trip from Bainbridge, NY to Great Bend, PA. The event will highlight the scenic beauty and recreational value of our local rivers, and the importance of maintaining them. The group is looking for sponsorship for the event from local businesses and organizations. The group agreed to sponsor the event in the amount of \$250 from the Joyce KL Smith Memorial Fund, dedicated to providing environmental education opportunities. Beth circulated a resolution for to show the EMC’s support of the event. Cindy moved and Tony seconded to approve the resolution in support of the EMC sponsorship of the event. All in favor, motion passed.

6. Membership and Administrative Items

- Beth circulated sign up sheets for the upcoming special events that need volunteers. These include the Earth Fest, Saturday, April 30th, 10am-4pm at Macarthur School in Binghamton, the opening reception for the Joyce KL Smith Photo Show scheduled for Wednesday, May 11th, 5:30-7:30pm., Photo Show special exhibit for the Susquehanna Heritage Area’s Heritage Weekend on May 14th from 12-5pm. The sign-up sheets will be emailed to the group as well.
- The 2010 Annual Report for the Planning Department has been completed and was distributed. This includes the report for the EMC.
- There was discussion about suggestions for a possible field trip. Suggestions included a tour of the Sewage Treatment Plant and a tour of the Ithaca deconstruction facility.

7. The meeting adjourned at **8:45 pm. Next meeting:** Thurs., May 5th @ 7:00pm, United Way of Broome County, Vestal.