

Broome County Environmental Management Council

Barbara J. Fiala, Broome County Executive • Stacy Merola, Director



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**Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC)
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE (NRC)
Minutes from November 20, 2008
Conference Room A, BC Health Department, 225 Front St, Binghamton, NY**

Present: Karen Ciatyk, Cindy Westerman, Rachael Cornick, Chip McElwee, Bill Heaviside, Julia Hoover, Andre LaClair, Mary Cronk, and Stacy Merola. **AWE:** Erin Heard.

Karen called the meeting to order at **4:12pm**.

1. Minutes from July and September were considered for adoption. July minutes were amended: item 2, sixth bullet, last sentence – change “you are” to “one is” for neutrality. Bill moved, Cindy seconded, to approve the July minutes as corrected and the September minutes as submitted. Motion carried.

2. BC Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Plan

Chip McElwee, BC Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD), outlined the services of the SWCD, and presented information and statistics about the latest revision of the Broome County Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Plan, a five-year voluntary, incentive based program or strategy that helps farmers operate environmentally sound and economically viable businesses.

The strategy begins with an inventory of current farm activities, future plans - issues that farmers have an interest in - and potential environmental concerns. Next, current land stewardship activities are documented, assessed, and areas of concern prioritized. A detailed conservation plan is developed to address concerns, opportunities and farm goals. The strategy is implemented with financial, educational and technical assistance. Lastly, the plan undergoes evaluation to ensure protection of the environment and farm viability.

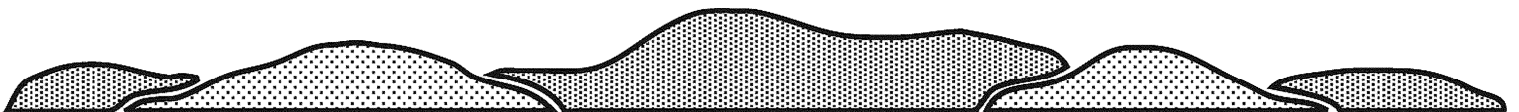
Chip said there are 40 active dairy farms and between 140-150 other farms in the county; SWCD works with roughly 200 farms. Of those, 164 have participated in the inventory phase of AEM, and between 60-75 farms have gone through the detailed comprehensive planning on the farms. The SWCD performed over \$5.8 million worth of implementation in the last seven years using a variety of federal and local programs.

For the purpose of the AEM document, the County is broken into seven planning units: Chenango River watershed, the Nanticoke Creek watershed, the Otselic River watershed, the Susquehanna River watershed – two pieces great bend and the lower main stem, the Tioghnoga River watershed, and the Oquaga Creek west branch of the Delaware River watershed. Priority rankings were given based on the density of agriculture and the type and the water quality concerns (drinking and groundwater) that farmers might have.

Chip talked about pollution restrictions – TMDLs (total maximum daily load) - as a result of Chesapeake Bay Program and the implications for nutrient management (phosphorus, nitrogen, sediments). Discussion ensued and included questions about nutrient management credits, which is an interesting concept that the SWCD supports. Chip asked specifically what we consider to be the biggest threats to water quality from agriculture. Members offered threats such as sediments, herbicide use, erosion, loss of farmland and resulting impacts on the food supply, marketability of ag products. Chip noted that abandoned farms have returned to forests giving the County almost 70% forest cover; 20% is in agriculture while the other 10% is parks, waterbodies, impervious areas, etc. He asked us to think about the benefits of agriculture on the landscape as well.

Chip will provide copies of the AEM Strategy to EMC and it will be posted on the broomeswcd.org website.

3. Natural Gas Drilling



Stacy circulated and discussed various testimonies that were given during the mid October public hearing before the NYS Assembly's Committee on Environmental Conservation about the dSGEIS on the proposed regulatory revisions to the NYSDEC's Oil, Gas, and Solution Mining Regulatory Program. Also discussed testimony heard at the NYSDEC's Nov 17 public scoping meeting for the dSGEIS, including points made by Cindy. The County Executive's letter to DEC about the scope was also shared. The Binghamton Regional Sustainability Coalition's outline on the scope was also distributed. Julia's points of concern were circulated for consideration and incorporation into a draft of EMC comments. Lengthy discussion ensued; members outlined other points to note in EMC comments. Stacy asked members to email points of concern for incorporation into one draft comment response document for EMC's consideration at the December 4 meeting. Comments on the draft scope are due to DEC no later than Dec 15.

4. Open Space Plan

Karen noted that because of all of the natural gas drilling issues, progress on the open space plan has been slow. She asked if anyone had anything to submit for review. Cindy gave suggested edits to Andre for his Section IV A. - Recommended Actions section that he circulated to the group in July. Stacy still needs time to assemble all of the sections so that a comprehensive disk can be burned for members. Bill did not receive any feedback on his Section IV E. - Distinctive Character section. Bill asked if River Crest (dry canal-bed) should be referenced in the OSP. Stacy noted that the Planning Dept has a copy of the Chenango Canal Study for the Dept. Library that we can reference.

5. Announcements/Privilege of the Floor/Member Items of Interest

- Bill was at a pharmacy and overheard another customer ask what he could do with his old medications. The pharmacist instructed the customer to put them all in a can, wet the material, shake violently and dispose of in the trash. Stacy noted that the Recycling & Waste Management Committee is discussing this topic, and that Josephine Chu, BU Student rep had done some research on this. DEC has a Do Not Flush It campaign underway.

- Stacy was invited to participate on the City of Binghamton's Steering Committee to conduct a pre-nomination brownfield opportunity area study for the City's First Ward neighborhood – the First Ward Neighborhood Square Brownfield Opportunity Area. The area is bounded by Clinton Street to the south, the Chenango River to the east, Prospect Street to the north, and Holland Street to the west. The Pre-nomination study is intended to provide a basic and preliminary analysis of the area affected by brownfield sites, document historical uses, identify suspected brownfields that need further assessment, outline potential adaptive reuses, and identify innovative marketing strategies for these properties. The first meeting is December 4 at 6pm, which conflicts with the EMC's general meeting.

- Karen circulated information about green burials that she found recently. She also noted there was an article in the paper recently about silicon chip development at IBM.

6. Next meeting: Thurs. Dec 17, 4pm, mtg room A, BC Health Dept., 225 Front St., Binghamton.

The meeting **adjourned at 6:20 pm**

Stacy Merola, recorder