

# Broome County Environmental Management Council

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



Broome County Office Building • 44 Hawley Street • P.O. Box 1766 • Binghamton, New York 13902  
(607) 778-2116 • Fax (607) 778-6051 • Website: [www.gobroomecounty.com](http://www.gobroomecounty.com)

## Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC) Notes from the meeting held Thursday, May 3, 2007 United Way Board Room, Jensen Road, Vestal, NY

### Present:

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

**Student Reps:** Melanie Feltmate (BU)

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

**Special Reps:** Kevin Mathers (CCE BC)

**Legislative Reps:** Ron Keibel (11<sup>th</sup> District)

**Staff/Intern:** Stacy Merola, Beth Egitto and Christina Prete

**Associate Members:** Terry Woodnorth

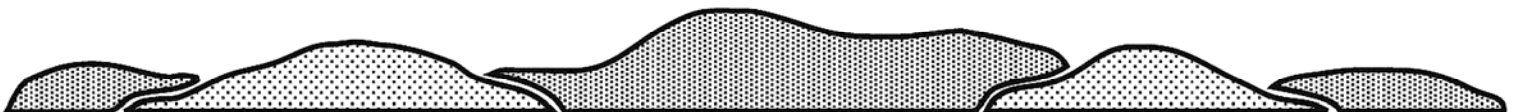
**Visitors:** Erin Heard, Julia Hoover, David Johnston (BCC Student), Ken Holmes, Alex Spencer, and Josephine Chu

**Absent with Excuse:** Mary Cronk, Doug Garner, Chip McElwee (BCSWCD)

1. Following introductions, André **convened** the meeting at **7:05 pm**. Minutes from April were approved on a motion by Karen, seconded by Bill, with the following amendments: under Absent with Excuse, "Berger" should be spelled "Burger." Page 3, Action Items, paragraph 1, "Tony moved" not "Terry".

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

- Invitations to the 2007 Joyce K.L. Smith Environmental Photo Show Opening Reception were mailed. It will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the BC Library, May 9 at 5:30pm. The exhibit will run through June 29. Deputy County Executive, Pat Brennan will distribute awards. The Press & Sun-Bulletin will feature the event and the 1<sup>st</sup> place winner's pictures in an article May 9.
- NYS requires that designated urban areas such as Broome County implement a Stormwater Management Program by the January 8, 2008 to comply federal Phase II Stormwater regulations. The County must prepare an annual report, solicit public comment, and submit it to the NYSDEC by June 1. BC will hold a Public Hearing at 4pm, May 17 before the Natural Resource Committee meeting. More details were distributed via email to the NRC distribution list. The County's plan will be posted on the [gobroomecounty.com](http://gobroomecounty.com) website.
- An EMC sponsored tour of the Delaware County Compost Facility in Walton, NY will be Wednesday, May 23 at 2:30 pm. Only 12 people can be accommodated for the tour; seven have signed up. The group will meet at Cornell Cooperative Extension at 1pm to carpool. Contact Stacy for info.
- The BC Planning Dept is sponsoring a State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) training seminar Tuesday, May 22 from 6:00-8:30pm as part of their Planning and Zoning seminar series. A brochure was circulated. Pre-registration is required and priority is given to Planning/ Zoning members.
- At the April Earth Fest, Earth Day Southern Tier (EDST) had plastic envelopes available for recycling old cell phones and ink cartridges. For every postage-paid envelope that is mailed to the return center, EDST receives a portion of proceeds. The envelopes and a list of alternate cell phone/battery recycling locations were circulated.
- Melanie received the SUNY system's Chancellors Award last week. Congratulations Melanie! The EMC gave her a Certificate of Appreciation as thanks for serving as BU Student Rep on the EMC for the past year. Her plans for next year are to study sustainability abroad.
- Christina Prete was also given a Certificate of Appreciation for serving as spring 2007 EMC Intern.
- Melanie reported that Binghamton University finished 5<sup>th</sup> in Recycle Mania for cans and bottles.
- A personal computer Take Back Day will be held on Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup> from 7am-12pm. Locations will accept monitors, processing units, keyboards, desktop printers and other items from any manufacturer for



recycling. Drop-off locations are Lockheed Martin, Owego; IBM Asset Recovery Center, Endicott; and Universal Instruments, Binghamton. Completion of a registration form is required before drop-off.

- A Community Tree Care 101 Seminar will be held Thursday, May 24 from 9am-3pm at the NYSDEC Cortland Office. The workshop will provide information on how to select quality trees from a nursery, how to maintain young trees, and how to properly plant trees. The cost is \$20 and includes lunch. For more information email Brian Liberti at bliberti@ci.syracuse.ny.us.
- Bill read about plans to build a two-story green building in Manhattan that will use geothermal energy. It was also noted that a green building is going up in Ithaca (College?).
- Terry brought a reusable bag from Price Chopper. Similar bags are available at Wegmans for about 99¢. Wegmans, Price Chopper and Giant Markets are also accepting plastic bags for recycling.

### **3. Special Presentation: Composting**

In celebration of International Compost Awareness Week (week of May 7<sup>th</sup>), Kevin Mathers, Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Educator and EMC Special Rep., spoke about composting in Broome County. Composting is the controlled aerobic decomposition of organic matter into a stable soil-like product. He outlined the varieties of organic wastes, how they are typically composted, and how composting is handled at municipal levels. The County contracts with CCE to promote composting. Municipal solid waste is largely composed of paper, yard waste and food scraps, which account for a large amount of weight that could be composted instead of land buried. These and others (sewage sludge, manure and road kill) can all be composted.

**Home Composting:** Backyard composting avoids fuel consumption associated with municipal waste collection and processing and is also an environmentally-friendly waste reduction practice. A typical family can compost 650 pounds/year. Paper can be composted (not glossy), but should be recycled when possible. Kevin advised exercising caution when composting food scraps because this attracts animals, especially bears which are most attracted to fruits. Worm bin composting is especially encouraged for small spaces. In addition, Kevin suggested returning mower clippings to the lawn as they provide up to 50% of needed nitrogen back to the lawn. CCE and BC Solid Waste promote home composting through workshops, classroom programs, literature and newsletters, demonstration sites, bin sales, and ad campaigns. **Municipal and Yard Waste:** Grass clippings and yard waste are banned from disposal in the County Landfill. The Village of Endicott and BC Landfill compost and turn yard wastes in open piles and then screen the finished product to remove large debris. The Towns of Vestal and Union compost yard wastes too, as does Boland's Excavating & Topsoil, but not to the same extent as the Landfill or Endicott so items may not be fully decayed. The Town of Chenango has a smaller municipal operation. Municipal composts are safe to use in gardens despite small pieces of plastics that remain. Pesticides tend to break down in soils to undetectable levels, but Kevin suggests that organic food growers be cautious about using municipal compost in their gardens. **Sewage Sludge:** Wastewater treatment plants that compost biosolids or sludge include the Binghamton-Johnson City Joint Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), the Villages of Deposit, Whitney Point and Endicott STPs, and West Windsor and Town of Chenango STPs. NYS regulations require testing for heavy metals, PCBs, and pathogens. Composted biosolids should only be used for landscaping or growing animal feed. **Farm Composting:** Most manure in BC is land applied through liquid manure systems. However, some small horse and beef farms are composting their animal waste. In addition, some farms compost animal carcasses. This requires a thick mulch to contain the smell and keep away scavengers and takes about 2 months to produce a usable product.

A brief discussion with questions and answers followed. Kevin was thanked for his time and for sharing educational resources.

### **4. The council decided to skip the break**

## 5. Committee Reports

- Membership Committee: **ACTION ITEM** Binghamton University student Josephine Chu's nomination to be the new Binghamton University Student Representative beginning August 2007 comes moved and seconded from the Membership Committee. All in favor; action carried. Josephine's name will be sent to the County Executive for confirmation and Legislative approval. Due to his absence, Chris Burger's application for Member-at-Large will be revisited in June. Bill moved and Karen seconded to nominate Julia Hoover for Associate Membership. All in favor; motion carried. Welcome Julia!
- Natural Resource Committee (NRC): The NRC did not meet in April. An email was sent regarding the Open Space Plan. Next meeting: Thursday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm. If members or the public would like to learn about the County's Stormwater Management Program, please come at 4pm.
- Recycling and Waste Management Committee (RWMC): The RWMC didn't meet in April. They will tour neighboring Delaware County's Composting Facility Wed. May 23<sup>rd</sup> in lieu of a May meeting.

## 6. Conservation Advisory Commission (CAC) Reports

- Vestal CAC: Cindy reported the CAC met Tuesday, April 24, but that she was absent. They were reported to have discussed the Vestal Creek Management project. Cindy also reported that she received an email about the proposed sports park. Next meeting: Tuesday, May 22, which may change due to conflict with the County's SEQR training.

## 7. Staff and Chair Reports

- Several members attended a local Sustainability Conference Wed., April 18<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 5pm at the Binghamton Regency. Terry Gips spoke about the Natural Step program, a strategy for achieving sustainability. Several businesses and municipalities worldwide have implemented the strategy. Half of the session focused on implementation, each group applying the strategy to a specific issue, from community parks to infrastructure. Beth and Terry circulated materials from the event.
- The Earth Fest was Sat., April 28 at BCC and was well attended. EMC had two info tables, one with a recycling awareness game; the other with educational resources and membership info. A topic of concern was outdoor wood burning. EMC volunteers were thanked for lending time to the event.
- The Bottle Bill expansion compromise letter, approved at the April EMC meeting, was sent to state elected officials. Email Stacy for a copy. EMC expects replies from several representatives.
- To promote New York's Heritage Awareness Month (May), there is an exhibit at the BC Library entitled "Preservation and You", highlighting our local historic resources. It can be found on the same floor as the EMC's Joyce Smith Photo Show exhibit. Jim Bryden, EMC June guest speaker, and other organizers of the exhibit are cataloguing New York's special places on their website, [www.nyslandmarks.com](http://www.nyslandmarks.com).
- Ideas were exchanged about future guest speakers. Andre suggested a professor address the science behind global warming. Julia will obtain a video about the Eco Home Network in California. Beth suggested someone come speak about green buildings.
- Cindy reported that the NYS Wetlands bill passed the Assembly and is currently before the Senate. At a recent Wetlands Conference she attended last month she found that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is evaluating dams in the Upper Susquehanna Basin. USFW wants to eliminate dams in Elmira and East Sidney. They established that none can be removed from the local area due to structural constraints.

## 8. The meeting adjourned at **9:25 pm**.

**Next meeting:** Thursday, June 7 at 7:00pm, United Way Board Room, Vestal, NY.

Christina Prete, recorder

Stacy Merola and Beth Egitto, editors