

# Broome County Environmental Management Council

Patrick J. Brennan, Broome County Executive



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## **Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC) Notes from the meeting held Thursday, December 1, 2011 Broome County Public Library, 185 Court Street Binghamton, NY 13901**

### **Present:**

**Members-at-Large:** Andre LaClair, Chris Burger, Karen Ciatyk, and Bill Heaviside

**Staff:** Beth Egitto, BC Planning

**Other:** Zack Smith, Shannon O'Connor, and Magda Masquita Mckeller

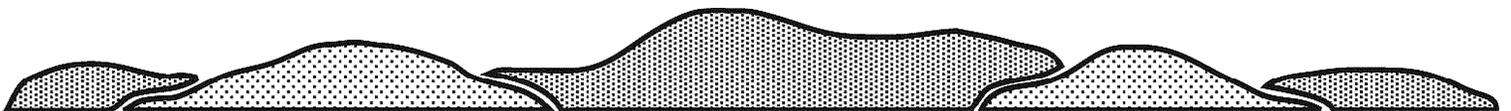
1. The meeting was **convened at 4:00 pm**. Bill noted a few grammatical corrections in the minutes. Bill made motion to approve the minutes as amended, Andre seconded it. All in favor. Motion approved.

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

- Beth distributed information on Green Fire, a documentary film on the life of conservationist Aldo Leopold. The event is free and will be on Saturday December 10, 2011 at Vestal United Methodist Church.
- Beth circulated information on the City of Binghamton Citizen Pruner Program.
- Beth circulated information on the "Eighth Annual Symposium on Energy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century". It will be held on Friday April 27, 2012 at "The Links" in East Syracuse, NY.
- Chris announced that he will be giving a presentation on January 29, 2012.

### **3. Membership and Administrative Items**

- Membership ballot
  - There are four people on the ballot for new membership. Adam Flint and Shelbi Hale had prior commitments, but have attended past meetings. Prospective members Shannon O'Connor and Zack Smith were in attendance and gave a short summary of their background to the council. Shannon is a Broome County resident. She has three years experience as paralegal and has worked in real estate for over 10 years. She is very interested in environmental issues, hiking, nature, and landscape photography. She is very interested in what the Council stands behind. Zack is currently working at BCC as a tutor in the areas of physics, chemistry. He also works with real estate appraisal doing commercial real estate values and gas rate valuation. He has a bachelor degree in geology and a master's degree in emergency management. He has worked for the Rochester Red Cross and he served on the Owego Emergency Planning Committee.
  - Ballots were due at this meeting. Beth will tally the votes and notify members of the results. The membership recommendations will then be sent to the County executive and who sends the appointments onto the legislature for approval.
- 2012 Calendar
  - Beth proposed two calendars. One would be to continue meeting on Thursdays and the other proposes a switch to Wednesdays, given that some there have been several conflicts on Thursdays. Andre noted that the planning board meetings in his town are held on the first Wednesday of the month so that creates a conflict. Everyone seemed agreeable that the second Wednesday would be fine. Beth will survey the members not in attendance to get their opinion.
  - Since several people arrived late at the 4:00 meeting, the group decided that the meeting times will be changed to 4:30 pm. The library is convenient and will be the permanent location from now on.



- Beth suggested perhaps reducing the number of meetings per year to better reflect what people are capable of doing. However, several members feel that would set a bad precedent and suggest scheduling 11 meetings, as usual, and canceling when necessary. Beth said that she would do this, but that canceling does require use of her already limited time for EMC administration. Therefore, members would need to be diligent about their participation.
  - For the NRC, Beth scheduled two months meeting and then a month off, for a total of eight meetings. Beth suggested this change so that the committee will meet when there is work to do and also because of the low attendance. There were suggestions to schedule a meeting every month, on the fourth Wednesday, until the open space plan is finished and if there is nothing to work on a specific month then cancel that meeting. The NRC will not meet in August or May (due to JKLS Photo Show) as usual.
  - Beth indicated that the group should schedule a couple of special presentations per year to be held in the evening for the public. These would be more publicized education events. On these days the EMC meeting will be held in the evening in conjunction with the event.
  - Beth will make changes to the calendar, based on the suggestions, and send it to the members by email so they can make comments.
- 2012 Work Plan
- Beth circulated a list of the ideas people gave for the work plan along with a list of topics, speakers, and events that people suggested. The work plan items include: the Earth Fest, the Joyce K. L. Smith Environmental Photography Competition and Show, the Riverbank Clean Up, the public education event, complete the open spaces plan, the impacts of gas drilling on water supply, air, and wildlife, flood prevention, provide input into the County comprehensive plan and the watershed planning; the hazard mitigation planning, the sewage treatment plan, the review of the bylaws, and member recruitment. Beth suggested focusing on specific things the Council can do in each of those areas. Andre suggested creating a guide on invasive species. Beth will be receiving more ideas on specific things that can be done and will develop the work plan into a narrative document.
  - Members expressed interest in the press reports about solid waste and privatizing the landfill. Beth commented that there hasn't been any additional information on this at the County as of yet, but the recycling committee can be called to task if needed.
  - The topics for speakers that people suggested include: effects of hydrofracking on animal and plant species, new county executive Debbie Preston for a small group meeting, Julian Shepherd – Unique Natural Areas, tools for open space planning, zero waste, Susquehanna River basin Commission regarding drilling, field trip to Whitney point dam, flood control and impacts after flood, reschedule geothermal energy speaker with other alternative energy topics, and EIT frack water purification. Beth will incorporate these topics into the work plan as public education component. She will send it out for further comments.
- Beth noted that the EMC will be having an intern for the next semester. Natalie Limbach has experience in GIS, so Beth plans to have her work on creating layers for the Open Space Plan. Some of the layers that are needed are wellhead protection areas and the county trails. Another idea is to create a comprehensive recreation guide. Beth explained the work the NRC has been doing on the Open Spaces plan to the new members to bring them up to date.

**4. Comments for the draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact State on Natural Gas Drilling**

- The comment period was extended to January 12, 2012.
- There was a discussion about the rdGEIS comments. Some points were brought up regarding formatting and wording, including.
- Regarding the content of the comments, some suggestions included: for background, referring to animal populations in general in point 5, not specifying arid regions in point 8, add Pennsylvania to the list in point 6. For some general comments: clarify energy strategies in point 4, address migration of volatiles in point 8, addressing the fact that there was the response to comments were not included, and adding the

statement that all municipal systems are equally susceptible to threats and expense associated to hydrofracking.

- There was further general discussion; a suggestion was to find out if the DEC has defined noise regulation for other industries. Chris will be sending his suggestions to Andre to incorporate in the comments.
5. The meeting adjourned at 5:20pm. **Next meeting:** Wednesday, January 11, 2012 at 4:30 pm