

# Broome County Environmental Management Council

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



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## Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC) Minutes from the meeting held Thursday, March 5, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. United Way Board Room, Jensen Road, Vestal, NY

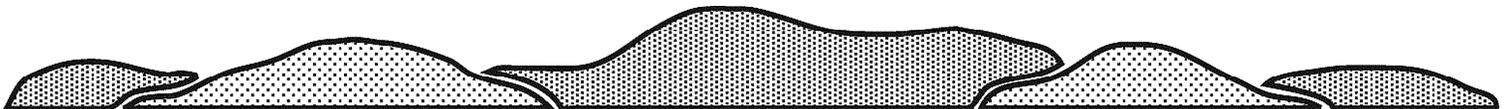
### Present:

**Members-at-Large:** Bill Heaviside, Julia Hoover, Chris Burger, Karen Ciatyk, Tony Lubzanski  
**Student Reps:** Rachel Cornick (BCC)  
**CAC Reps:** Cindy Westerman (Vestal)  
**Special Reps:** Kevin Mathers (Cornell Cooperative Ext.)  
**Legislative Reps:** Ron Keibel (11<sup>th</sup> District), Barry Klipsch (18<sup>th</sup> District)  
**Associate Members:** Marley Urdanick  
**Staff/Intern:** Stacy Merola and Adam Robbins  
**Guests:** Jaime Welch, Mark Lyons, Mike Voorhees, Lawrence Lehman, Gay Canough, Victoria Londner, Dylan Horvath  
**Absent with Excuse:** Andre LaClair, Bob Denz, Erin Heard, and Josephine Chu

1. Cindy Westerman, EMC Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01pm. Introductions followed. February 5 minutes were reviewed. Grammatical changes were made: item 3, second paragraph, first sentence - switch "revised" and "the"; Under Membership Committee, second sentence - change "come" to "came." On a motion from Mary, seconded by Karen, February's minutes were approved as amended. Motion carried.

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

- Call for entries: 2009 Joyce K.L. Smith Environmental Photography Show and Competition. Submission deadline is Wednesday, March 11. Photos will be judged March 18.
- Brownfield Opportunity Area – Endicott Johnson Industrial Spine Public meeting to be held Thursday, March 12, 7pm at the Fire House Stage in the Village of Johnson City. Document circulated by Stacy concerning the consultant's proposal for the revitalization of that area.
- Earth Fest – Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 10am-5pm at MacArthur School & Park, Vestal Ave, Binghamton. EMC will have two tables promoting membership outreach and some generic outreach.
- Stacy informed EMC that it may not be feasible to conduct the annual Book Recycling Fair this year.
- An order form was circulated regarding the BC Soil & Water Conservation District's sale of stock fish ranging from trout, bass, minnows, channel catfish, etc. Order deadlines begins April 10 for certain fish.
- The Endicott History & Heritage Center will hold an open house March 28; reservation deadline is March 21.
- The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is looking for landowners to help with the first major field assessment of wild turkey management in NYS since the 1970s. Flyer was circulated for information.
- Cindy noted that Brenda Erindale from the Damascus Citizens Group will address the Susquehanna Chapter of the Sierra Club at their March 17 meeting about natural gas drilling. Kevin Mathers will address the group April 21 about wood as an energy resource. Meetings are held at the United Methodists Church on Nanticoke Ave, Endicott, 7pm. Two other presenters will be coming to speak about gas drilling, Cindy said.
- Chris announced that a Growing a Sustainable Community Conference will be held April 17 & 18 at Broome Community College. Topics will range from sustainable energy, green building, resource management, green jobs, sustainable food systems, etc. Chris also asked for volunteers to attend the Home Show that the Binghamton Regional Sustainability Coalition (BRSC) and Earth Day Southern Tier will table that will discuss how to live green.



### **3. Guest Speaker: Dr Gay Canough, President of ETM Solar Works**

Dr Gay Canough, President of Extraterrestrial Materials (ETM) Solar Works originally started for spare solar power projects. Projects were based on the idea of beaming energy to earth in order to harness it at a higher and more efficient rate. Dr Canough explained that the feasibility and minor technicalities for these types of projects seemed impracticable at the time, but the idea to harness this energy did not. Solar power is a useful, clean way to produce ample amounts of renewable energy without harming the environment. Many utilities are also becoming increasingly more interested in solar power because it offers a kind of distributed source of energy production and helps to relieve some of the stress on the “grid” by having individual facilities/homes produce their own sustainable forms of energy. Decreasing our dependence on fossil fuels is the main goal behind solar initiatives. In order to accomplish this, Dr. Canough offered a recipe that starts with energy efficiency (energy star products, fluorescent lighting, efficient heating/cooling systems, etc.) and works its way up to solar and wind power. Dr. Canough also formulated an outline to follow to reduce your load: (1) use compact fluorescent lights (many different kinds of unique lights are available at [www.bulbs.com](http://www.bulbs.com)); (2) energy star appliances (refrigerators, washing machines); (3) line dry your cloths (4) beware of phantom load (leaving appliances plugged in when not being used wastes tons of energy).

Two forms of harnessing solar power to convert it to useful energy is solar hot water heating and photovoltaic (PV). The incentives for solar hot water heating has seen its share of ups and downs and until only recently incentives have had a big increase on tax credits for these systems. Not only are these systems better at creating cleaner energy than the burning of fossil fuels, but from the manufacturing to the installation, Dr. Canough calculated that for about every 1000 kilowatt (kw) of energy, 30 jobs are created. Photovoltaics are a more complex system that convert light energy to electricity. The construction of these solar cells relies on silicon, which is abundant on earth. The most effective use of these solar cells is placing them on top of buildings, servicing the building below. Also in order to optimize energy production, south facing systems are best, and system owners should be weary of any shade in the area. Extensive surveying of the target area should be done before any installation takes place in order to ensure the most advantageous conditions.

Dr. Canough briefly discussed the debate about small home wind energy production systems. The fact about these systems is that there are only specific areas that this type of system would be most efficient in (to check if you qualify for these specified areas you can check [www.AWSfreewind.com](http://www.AWSfreewind.com)). The sun’s energy is so abundant, however, that we really do not need to use other forms of energy. New York State’s energy load from wind now could serve about 17% of its citizens. With about 75% of New York’s land area, Dr. Canough projects that we could serve 100% of New York’s load with solar. The US is severally lagging behind the rest of the industrialized world in their efforts to go solar. In 2006, Germany was the leading country with 55% of its energy coming from solar, while smaller countries like Spain produced 20%. The U.S. only has about 8% coming from solar, but with the exponential increase in manufacturing of solar cells in the past few years, the US is sure to see an increase in these statistics. Some of the towns and states that have made the initiative to go solar are the NY towns of Rosendale and Greenburg, the Philadelphia Housing Authority, Tompkins County Public Library, NYS Dept. of Transportation (Kirkwood), and the Albany Hockey Facility to name a few. Dr Canough noted that the local Oakdale Mall has enough roof space to produce enough energy for about 1000 houses.

A unique design innovation to reduce the need for batteries to store excess power is called net metering. In times of excess production and little consumption, net metering allows system owners to receive credit for the portion of excess energy they generate and do not use by trading it to the grid. The system owner can sell these credits for retail or in times of little energy production and increased consumption can use these credits to receive the needed power that they could not produce. This process was modeled off of a German policy which allows their system owners to sell any unused electricity back to the grid for credit or a certain dollar amount.

As for incentives, a typical solar system can run anywhere upwards of \$45,000 before tax incentives. After all tax incentives are factored into the cost, the system will be reduced to around \$18,000. These systems come with a 20-year power warranty to continue to produce 80% - 90% of electricity after 20 years of constant use with an average total life expectancy to be about 40 years. The inverters, which tie the system to the grid, can last about 15 years, while the batteries can last about 8 – 12 years. Dr Canough stressed that the US needs to stop outsourcing jobs by importing vast amounts of energy. NY alone imports 95% of its energy. In order to create a more sustainable clean future, we need to create new jobs at home as well as limit the consumption of non-renewable foreign energy.

Julia asked what the difference between sun slates and the regular traditional models are. Simply put, the sun slates, while more expensive, are used more for aesthetic purposes. Rachel asked what happens to the solar panels when they are no longer usable for solar absorption. The silicon can be reused, as well as some of the chemicals and wiring can be recycled. Stacy asked a general question of how Dr. Canough ended up in Binghamton. Dr Canough has a background in physics and the aerospace industry. Originally working for IBM, Dr. Canough wanted a change. While living in Binghamton, she kept hearing people say there isn't enough sun in Binghamton, but realized the customer base in Binghamton for solar production systems was massive and there was no need to move. Cindy stated a concern she has with her system regarding snow covering the solar panels in the winter. Dr. Canough concurred that snow can be troublesome but offered the idea that tilting the panels a little bit more might alleviate the problem. Chris asked if any interest free loans with pay out of savings are available. A program like that has been instituted, such as the way Germany does it by setting an income to help finance the cells. Ron asked if solar panels increase the value to a house once they are installed. Unfortunately, California has the only database on houses with solar production systems, but their data confirms that houses with solar panels can increase the value of a home. Tony asked if lightening is a problem but Dr. Canough confirmed they're haven't been any serious problems with lightening as long as good grounding systems are used.

Dr Canough was thanked for her time and informative presentation. Interested persons can visit ETM's website at [www.etmsolar.com](http://www.etmsolar.com).

**4. The Council recessed for a ten-minute break.**

#### **5. Committee Reports**

Natural Resources Committee (NRC) - Bill reported that the NRC February 19 and heard several announcements of interest. A meeting was held February 25 at Union Endicott High School to discuss contaminated bedrock groundwater in Endicott. The Village of Endicott hosted a free collection for unwanted pharmaceuticals February 28. The City of Binghamton held a Deconstruction Seminar at the County Library February 24; EMC staff attended. NRC member Jamie Welch will participate in a Broome County Hazardous Vulnerability Analysis meeting March 18at the County Health Department and report back to NRC. Discussed briefly the BC Open Space Plan and the NYS DEC's final scope for the Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement on the Oil & Gas well drilling program. Karen began an inventory of state parks with snowmobile access (43 parks with snow mobile trails so far). Next meeting: March 19, 4pm, BC Health (BCHD).

Recycling and Waste Management Committee (RWMC) – Stacy reported the RWMC met February 23 at BCHD. Discussed reports related to the BC Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) update: the Recyclable Material Characterization Study and Issues Paper #1: BC Environmentally Preferred Products & Recycled-Content Procurement Policies. Consultants working on the BC SWMP revision will produce ten or more white papers. Issue paper #2 will address commercial, industrial, institutional and multifamily recycling. Staff shared a scope of proposed mulch and soil amendment facility proposed for Kirkwood. Several announcements of interest were noted. Next meeting: March 23, 4pm, BC Health (BCHD). **[Editor's note: the 3/23 RWMC meeting was cancelled].**

Membership Committee – The BC Legislature approved the Legislative Chairman’s appointments of Barry Klipsch and Ron Keibel to serve as non-voting members on the EMC through 2010. EMC awaits word from the County Executive for non-voting ex-officio appointments for Parks, Planning, Public Works, Solid Waste and Envi Health.

**ACTION ITEM** - Held over from February is Jamie Welch’s Associate Member (AM) application, which comes endorsed by the Membership Committee. The Council unanimously approved Jamie as a new AM on a motion from Chris, seconded by Bill. She and Marley Urdanick are two new AMs who have been actively participating in Council activities since January. Welcome!

After discussion, Bill moved, Chris seconded, to nominate both Marley Urdanick and Jamie Welch as Members-at-Large to fill two long-standing vacancies on the EMC. Motioned carried. Their names will be forwarded to the County Executive for confirmation and then for Legislative approval.

#### **6. Conservation Advisory Commission (CAC) Reports**

Cindy reported the CAC met February 24 and discussed drilling and the scope for the draft SGEIS for drilling. Eminent domain issues related to gas transmission pipelines was deliberated. Cindy reported to the CAC what she’d learned from updates about the McGowan development project for Rano Blvd area, which is may be impacted by the economic downturn. References were made to the Town Clerk retiring and what that might mean to the Town. Supervisor Andreasen read the CAC’s report on creeks and plans to entertain further discussion with the CAC. Next meeting: March 24, 7:30pm, Vestal Town Hall.

#### **7. Staff and Chairs Reports**

- Staff received comments on the draft scope for the dSGEIS from the Society for Architectural Vision and the Environment (SAVE) concerning some potential hazards that drilling may cause to archeological sites and historic structures.
  - Staff received a rough draft for informational purposes only of the DEC’s proposed rule for 6NYCRR Part 247 – Outdoor Wood Boilers, which is currently under review by the Governor’s Office of Regulatory Reform as part of the process. Comments can be made to DEC contact John Barnes.
  - The County’s Office of Emergency Services will hold an invitation only Hazard Vulnerability Analysis workshop, March 18 at the BCHD. Representatives from the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) will facilitate a discussion to collect data to calculate the County’s hazards using risk analysis software. Floods and natural gas drilling are obvious issues of concern.
  - Staff attended a day-long Deconstruction Seminar February 24 sponsored by the City of Binghamton to learn about efficient ways for deconstruction rather than demolition.
  - Staff solicited ideas for guest speakers for April and May. Possibilities include The Center for Technology and Innovation (Susan Sherwood) and perhaps Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo.
  - Discussion commenced again about the Environmental Analyst vacancy and the County’s intentions, which are unknown. The Commissioner has not responded to staff’s requests for a status report.
  - The EMC’s 2008 annual report preparation is not yet compiled.
- **Next EMC General meeting:** Thursday, April 2, 7pm United Way, Vestal.

The meeting **adjourned at** 9:35 p.m.

Adam Robbins, recorder  
Stacy Merola, editor