

COLUMBIA COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
24 June 2013

PRESENT:

Ed Simonsen, Chairman, Kinderhook
Deirdre Henderson, Chatham
Ellen Jouret- Epstein, Germantown
Daniel M. Marcus, Stockport
Jamie Purington, Ancram
Kathy Schneider, Stuyvesant
Bruce Shenker, New Lebanon
Guy Apicella, Greenport
Guy Winig, Hillsdale
Harvey Weber, Copake
Michael Hamilton, Livingston
Melissa Sorman, Gallatin

Ex-officio members:

Theresa Mayhew, Cornell Coop Ext
Ed Van Nostrand, Col Co Health

REGRETS

Karen Mort, Ghent

ABSENT

Michael O'Hara, Hudson
Scott Stackpole, Taghkanic

VACANT

Austerlitz
Canaan
Claverack
Clermont

1. CALL TO ORDER/Welcome

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of April and May 2013 were approved, with minor changes to the May Minutes.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ed thanked Karen Mort for preparing the May Minutes. It appears that EMC will not be getting a secretary. Deirdre suggested that EMC members be provided with a current Roster.

The meeting moved onto Agenda # 6, as there were two presenters on the looming presence of the Emerald Ash Borer in the County: Marilyn Wyman (Issue Leader, Natural Resources & the Environment, Agroforestry Resource Center) and Erin Brady

(Outreach Coordinator, Office of Communication, Training & Enforcement Coordination, DEC Division of Lands & Forests).

6a. Emerald Ash Borer is an imminent threat to ash trees in Columbia County. Currently threatening trees in PA, NH, OH, MN, IN, KY, and NC among others, the bug results in 100% fatality.

One goal is to encourage municipalities to prepare for possible massive loss of trees. Is this an aesthetic and environmental problem, but there are negative economic outcomes as well—ash is a major commercial product in the state. To quote from one of the 4 handouts, “Costs to municipalities, property owners, nursery operators and forest products industries will easily range into the billions of dollars”.

If communities work together with local groups, agencies and state and national groups, they can prepare an Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Community Preparedness Plan. Working with other groups will help communities deal with what could be major economic burdens on Towns in our County.

Another goal is to slow spread of the disease. Taking down trees before they are infected is more cost effective than having to clear out dead wood on a massive scale. Quarantines, chemical controls and bio controls are all being considered for the arsenal of protection. First detector training for local volunteers and community education (in addition to educating local authorities) are two other direct actions to be taken. Looking for and coordinating grant monies, taking inventory of trees in the community and working with regional foresters are other strategies.

EAB is one of many scourges the County faces. Asian Longhorn Beetle, Tent Caterpillar, Gypsy Moth, Hemlock Adelgid and an explosion of Invasives (e.g., multiflora rose) work together to threaten our trees.

For more information, the website for educational and planning resources is:
<http://nyis.info>

For the remainder of Agenda #6, see below.

4. CORRESPONDENCE:

Memorandum/hazardous substance processing draft report from Ed Simonson and others dated 6/17/13, see below #5.b

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Training programs, and other, CAC formation

Ellen reported on the last CAC Roundtable when a CAC member from Red Hook discussed how to get involved with a CAC especially if the Town Planning Board is resistant. The next CAC Roundtable will be held on October 10th. Other topics she mentioned are the Rural Roads (Complete Streets) Program, programs on Stormwater, "Mean Green" infrastructure, ditching & scenic ordinances. In November, George Rodenhausen will do a talk on easements & subdivisions. For dates of trainings and other topics to be offered, see the CLC website.

b. Hazardous substance processing memorandum.

With discussion, and minor revisions, the draft was approved unanimously by a voice vote. It was moved and passed that the document will be sent to the BOS and to Ken Flood. EMC will then recommend further distribution after discussion at the July meeting.

c. Hydrofracking/EMC recommendations

A Motion was Made: "EMC agrees to not make formal recommendations at this point because it appears to us currently that there is a low risk to Columbia County. However EMC will continue to monitor the situation." The Motion passed unanimously.

6. NEW/OLD Business

a. Emerald Ash Borer—see above

b. Col. Co. water resources protection plan.

It was agreed that this would be a new focus for the EMC. Some discussion ensued regarding the Greater Stockport Creek Watershed, the NYS Rural Water Association, the possibility/feasibility of joint aquifer studies within the County and the affect to the aquifer of arsenic in old cemeteries.

c. Identification of hazardous sites in the County. EMC members will email ideas of such sites to Ed.

The next EMC meeting is July 22nd, 2013.

The meeting was adjourned at 9.p.m.

MSorman