



**Dutchess County
Environmental Management Council (DCEMC)
Meeting Minutes
September 25, 2024**

This meeting was held by Zoom

Attendance:

At-Large Members	Present	Absent
Pete Berasi	X	
James Fredrickson		X
Vicky Kelly	X	
Constance Kustas		X
Dave Mergendahl		X
John Paraskeva		X
Nancy Severns	X	
Lora Schilling	X	
Kate Susman	X	
Ex Officio, CAC Members & Others		
Devin Rigolino, Dutchess County Dept. Planning & Development	X	
Lisa Kaul, County Legislator	X	

Welcome/Intro/Chairman's comments: In Jim Fredrickson's absence, Nancy Severns welcomed all to the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

Meeting Minutes: A motion to accept the minutes of the August 2024 meeting was made by Pete Berasi with a second by Lora Schilling; all were in favor.

Correspondence: The EMC received an email from Kerry Russell about Revised Opportunity - Dutchess County Composting Grant.

Website update: Vicky reported that Ed Hogarty tackled and resolved an issue with Wordpress, we are very grateful to have him keeping the website for us.

Funds Update: We received funding to attend the NYSACC conference, which Vicky and Nancy attended.

NYSACC 2024 Conference Update:

Nancy reported on the NYSERDA Build ready program and later sent a link to the website. This program identifies appropriate sites in NY and does much of the enabling development work for energy projects with potential climate change impact.

Vicky provided these comments to the group via email:

I attended the morning session. It was very good, I highly recommend that one of us attend this and report each year. Speakers and notes below.

1. Black Farmers United NYS. Julian Mangano – an enormous effort by Black farmers to help other Black people who want become farmers
2. Using Local Land Use Authority to Protect Water Quality. Katherine Black DEC – I missed most of this b/c the platform flummoxed me.
3. Family Forest Carbon Program. Mark Zimmerman, The Nature Conservancy – landowners with 30+ acres get small tax relief for managing forests
4. Nine Element Watershed Plans. Gabriel Yerdon, Tug Hill Commission, Aaron McKeon NY Regional Planning & Development Board – structured approach to managing non-point sources of pollution such as road salt or phosphorous. Funding available to develop plans <https://dos.ny.gov/local-waterfront-revitalization-program>, <https://dos.ny.gov/water-resources-management>
5. NYS Climate Smart Communities & NYSERDA's CEC. Lindsay Auden, Croton-on-Hudson Sustainability Committee – a model community, one of the first to get certified – initial actions has allowed them to get big grants for e.g., EV charging stations. CSC & CEC programs will combine next year.
6. Wildlife Connectivity, Alissa Fadden, The Nature Conservancy – managing land to allow wildlife to move about the landscape, funding available for projects The Connectivity, Climate and Communities Fund

Draft Enabling Legislation: no updates

EMC Members: no updates

Chair of Environment Committee of the County Legislature: no updates

Reports:

Climate Smart Communities Update: Devin and Nancy reported that the County received Silver status as a Climate Smart Community. The County adopted a Climate Action Plan and is wrapping a Climate Adaptation Plan. A press release about silver status will go out September 26. The silver status elevates the County for receiving grants and as such, the County received a \$3 million EPA grant to assess and reduce methane emissions from the county's landfills.

Additionally the County received a \$40,000 NYSEDA grant to replace EV charging stations. The County is now also eligible for \$600,000 grants for clean energy programs.

Fishkill Creek Watershed Alliance: Pete Berasi reported that the group meeting has been delayed to October 10. They had a tent at East Fishkill's community day so got good publicity.

Solid Waste Management: The group discussed recommending that a study be done and using the study as a source for the State of Environment report section about solid waste management. The group decided to send a letter to the legislature stating that we recommend a study to investigate ways to reduce waste in the county. Nancy will draft a letter and send it to the group.

State of Environment Report:

Vicky reported that the completion date for the new report will be April 2025 and that we have authors for the following sections:

1. Forever Chemicals – Kate Susman & Dave Mergendahl & possibly Devin Rigolino
2. Wildlife Management and Conservation – Alex Wolf, Scenic Hudson
3. Invasive Species – Nancy Severns
4. Land Conservation – Julie Hart, DLC
5. Land Use Change – Sean Carroll, DLC
6. Climate Change and Alternative Energy – Devin Rigolino
7. Lyme Disease and other Vector Borne Diseases – Vicky Kelly, Cary Institute
8. Water: Droughts, Floods and Water Quality – Vicky Kelly, Cary Institute
9. Air and Precipitation Quality – Vicky Kelly, Cary Institute

We still need to find authors for these sections:

1. Environmental Cleanup, Brownfield, and Superfund Sites. Devin will ask a staff member update the table in this section and Lora Schilling will update the text.
2. Waste Disposal, Composting and Recycling. The group will continue to discuss how to update this section.

Road Salt: Vicky conveyed the message from John Paraskeva that the town of East Fishkill has purchased equipment and arranged for shared brine acquisition with Putnam County in order to use brine this coming winter.

Peach Hill Green Infrastructure Project: Lora reported that they had a subcommittee meeting about how to move forward and where to pursue projects, people to reach out to and next steps. They will meet monthly. They've been in contact with teachers, parks and school districts. Lora requested information about volunteer opportunities for middle school students. Vicky suggested pursuing libraries as resources and potential places for projects.

Wappinger School Alliance: Lora will be a liaison to the program to help students with environmental projects. They will be looking for professionals in the environmental community to review student projects.

Other Business:

Lisa reported that the clean water legislation that passed the legislature will be open for public review at 10:00 am on September 26. Devin updated the group about the process of signing (or not) by the County Executive. If it is signed, it will then be sent to the NY State Department to be placed on the books. Development of the implementation of the new law will be done by the health and planning departments who are already meeting weekly to develop the implementation plans and materials. Once the policies and procedures are developed, meetings with each municipality will be done to educate them and help them understand their part in implementing the law. The EMC can/should send a letter to the chair of the legislature's environment committee, the chair of the legislature and county executive expressing our frustration at not being consulted or informed about the law and expressing frustration that the law was passed so rapidly without adequate opportunities for public and municipality input. Nancy will draft a letter and send it to the group.

Lisa informed the group that we can issue a survey about partnering on green infrastructure projects and youth engineer programs such as the Peach Hill Project.

A motion to adjourn was made by Vicky Kelly. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the EMC is October 23, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Vicky Kelly, Recording Secretary