

## **Minutes of the EMC General Meeting July 14, 2010**

**Voting Members Present (12):** Sarah Adams, Spring Buck, Brian Eden, Martha Ferger, Anthony Guarneri, Katie Kelly, Dan Lamb, Stan Marcus, Roger Segelken, Helen Slottje, Lucia Tyler, Eric VanEvery

**Voting Members Excused (8):** Eric Banford, Clement Chow, Kenneth Christianson, Jim McGarry, Steve Nicholson, Kristine Shaw, Gary Stewart, Roger Yonkin

**Non-Voting Members Present (3):** Karen Edelstein, Peter Harriott, Peter Stein

**Guest Present:** Diane Cohen

**Staff Present:** Scott Doyle

**Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order by Chair Roger Segelken at 7:02 p.m. at the Finger Lakes ReUse field trip location.

**Privilege of the Floor** – There were no visitors who wished to speak under Privilege of the Floor.

**Changes to the Agenda and Approval of Minutes** – Brian Eden asked that the description of his comments noted on page 2, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, 5<sup>th</sup> line be amended to more accurately describe his contribution to the discussion. Specifically, he requested it say “Brian Eden commented that the County obtains electricity through MEGA. MEGA has a contract with Integrys New York, a division of a Chicago based utility. Integrys generates 2.5 times as much electricity from coal as does NYSEG. MEGA’s contract with Integrys expires at the end of 2010. This provides an opportunity to encourage the purchase of electricity from less polluting generators.” Peter Harriott also asked that clarification be made to his statement on page 2, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph that the report should clarify that N2O is a greenhouse gas but one that is a result of agriculture. It should be further noted that NO is the greenhouse gas that is generated by power plants. Draft minutes were moved by Katie Kelly and seconded by Martha Ferger. Minutes passed by show of hands. Final minutes are available on the EMC webpage: [www.tompkins-co.org/emc](http://www.tompkins-co.org/emc). There were no changes to the agenda.

**Finger Lakes ReUse** – Diane Cohen, Executive Director of Finger Lakes ReUse, was introduced by Dan Lamb. In his introduction, Dan noted that Finger Lakes ReUse is a new organization that has seen success thanks to a strong board (which includes EMC member Sarah Adams) and creative vision. Diane began by saying that Bailey Phipps, eCenter Coordinator, had planned on attending the meeting, though was home with a virus. Diane, formerly with Significant Elements for 8 years, introduced Finger Lakes ReUse as an organization that operates the ReUse Center, which serves as an outlet for all things reused; the eCenter, which provides a number of computer services and products; and Deconstruction Services, which provides a green alternative to traditional demolition.

In its business, Finger Lakes ReUse has created 11 living-wage jobs with benefits and provides a number of positive opportunities for student involvement. Currently four Cornell student workers are assisting with work on the retail side and two jobs-bill students – a program operated through the Department of Social Services -- are working with Deconstruction Services. Diane explained that the ReUse Center does not pay for any of the items it receives and typically sells items at 50-90% off their retail value. Products at the ReUse Center are sold as they are. She explained an operation like Significant Elements is different because it specializes in architecturally significant products and will sometimes pay to acquire those products. The eCenter also relies on donations, but adds value to products such as computers by cleaning their data three times over and installing software for use. The Deconstruction Program is set up as fee for service, providing its clients with detailed tax-deduction receipts for the work and items that are removed from sites.

Peter Stein asked what kind of tonnage the operation anticipates it has diverted from the waste stream. Diane admitted to not having a handle on total amounts of tonnage diverted but provided some helpful examples. The ReUse Center

has alone diverted approximately 40 tons; an event they coordinated at a local kitchen and bath center, which was closing resulted in the sale of about 20 tons of products; and a deconstruction project of a 1930's cottage on Ithaca College property resulted in 14 tons of products saved for reuse and 7 tons thrown away. The example from IC was very accurate as they utilized the scales at Solid Waste to assess the load. Diane went on to say that they are limited in the quantities they work with based on the size of the space they have available. Prior to beginning the operation, she felt that they would need approximately 20,000 square feet plus an outdoor yard. That number is confirmed in that they currently operate out of a constrained space in Triphammer Mall which is 13,000 square feet that does not have any outdoor usage. Triphammer Mall has been very supportive of their operation as a whole, citing the fact that they did not charge the non-profit any rent for the first six months it occupied the space. Diane indicated that she is constantly looking for a large enough space that they can purchase affordably, though most commercial properties have a preference to rent space, which is much less affordable for an operation such as theirs.

Brian Eden indicated that a central location for the operation is critical. He said that this was perhaps a grandchild of previous reuse efforts such as PROD (People for the Reduction of Disposals) that he was formerly involved with that stressed this importance. Anthony Guarneri concurred with the importance and felt that Wickes Lumber would be a great drop off point very close to the Solid Waste facility. Diane agreed. Anthony went on to ask what items sell best. Diane's response was that furniture sells "like water". Kitchen cabinetry also is sold very quickly. She noted that the Center offers delivery at a fee to assist with this.

Diane fielded a number of added questions including Katie Kelly's, which asked if all the reusable items from the deconstruction work end up in the ReUse Center. Diane indicated that they did. Spring Buck asked if items like drywall and ceiling tiles end up there as well. Diane said that those types of items require added space that they don't have at this time. Brian Eden asked about the rates they pay to dispose of the other items. She responded that the \$70-80 per ton rate is what they typically pay. In response to Lucia Tyler's question about the best sellers in the eCenter, Diane said computers sell very well and there is huge demand, especially for laptops. When computers are donated she said that their hard drives are wiped three times and new software is installed. Katie also asked about thresholds for items they don't accept. Diane pointed to provided brochures that outlined the parameters for clean, working products. Brian noted the proposed bill that would require retailers to take back products when a new item is purchased. Diane indicated that they are watching that closely and looking for partnership opportunities. Dan Lamb asked what kinds of limits there were on growth of this industry. Diane said that they would like to work throughout the Finger Lakes and do work regionally. For example, Deconstruction Services works within 60 miles. She sees the potential to franchise the model to other communities such as Binghamton. Spring asked if they were working with INHS. Diane said that at this time they are not. Roger Segelken asked about the interest and ability to move buildings. The group discussed the complications with that especially, as Sarah Adams indicated, in terms of power lines. Dan Lamb concluded the discussion by asking Diane that, as the EMC is a government advisory group, is there anything that the EMC can do within County government to help influence their work. Diane said that Tompkins County Solid Waste has been a terrific partner and supporter. She did indicate that the County is not a member of the Southern Tier Regional Planning Board and this presented a problem in terms of applying for some funds through that group. Perhaps the EMC could investigate that deeper?

The EMC concluded the discussion with Diane with a round of applause for the work of Finger Lakes ReUse.

**Committee Reports – Energy:** Brian Eden reported that while the group has been meeting, it was not prepared to provide a report with Chair Steve Nicholson absent from the meeting. **Environmental Review:** Sarah Adams discussed the comments ERC provided for the Lansing Meadows project and the considerable amount of time that was being put into the review of the Collegetown Terrace project. A whole range of items are of concern in relation to this project including the impact to the Sixmile Creek UNA, stormwater runoff, parking, aesthetics and traffic. The EMC discussed many of the items related to this proposed project. Sarah indicated that the initial comments are due this Friday, July 16<sup>th</sup>. Sarah also discussed the frustration the committee had with the amount of time it had to review large projects and indicated that she would like to see that improved. **Unique Natural Areas:** Karen Edelstein noted that the UNA committee was in the process of reviewing the 16-acre Hawthorn Orchard for its candidacy as a new UNA. This will be the first candidate reviewed under the UNA Inventory Protocol Amendment Process. She requested support from the EMC for initiating the review of this site against the protocol. Helen Slottje moved that the EMC concurs with the UNA committee's determination that Hawthorn Orchards has sufficient merit to be further explored to be established as an UNA and as such the UNA committee should continue following the established amendment process and prepare

a report for EMC review. Dan Lamb seconded the motion. Motion passed with a show of hands by all voting members with the exception of Spring Buck who abstained. Communication: Spring Buck reported that the float in the Ithaca Festival parade was a success and that it was time again to consider nominations for the Transportation Initiative of the Year (TIY). Last year was the first year for the award. The winner of the initial award was Ithaca Carshare. Nominations for this year's award should be sent to Spring or any other Communications committee member. Spring also discussed meeting space, specifically how the Transit Center has been difficult to use after hours. In particular, it is a concern that the EMC is making efforts to include the public in meetings and the building remains locked while the group meets. Additionally, there is no transit service to the Transit Center during meeting times. The Cornell East Hill Office Building has been secured for use. East Hill Plaza has transit service late that would accommodate the group's needs. September's meeting will be held at this location as a trial.

**Municipal Reports** – Town of Dryden: Stan Marcus said that the Town is in the process of developing an open space plan from its open space inventory and looking into aquifer protection measures. The big news in Dryden is the proposed zoning law with a public meeting for comment set for July 22. The main item of potential controversy is the proposed conservation zone which allows only 1 dwelling unit per 8 acres. Town of Ulysses: Lucia Tyler reported that as a result of the Town's Comprehensive Plan they were in the process of designating a conservation zone as well as a lakeshore zone. A GIS intern was helping with that process in addition to establishing proposed boundaries for CEA designation. The town is also working on an agriculture protection plan that incorporates gas drilling items. She concluded expressing concern over wild parsnip, which is in the hogweed family. She felt that it presents quite the hazard and needs to be publicized. She asked that the EMC consider publicizing the concerns related to this plant.

**Other Reports** – Chair: Roger Segelken stated that in addition to considering the new meeting space, he'd like to see more field trips like the one to Finger Lakes ReUse. County Legislature: Peter Stein reported that the Legislature continued to work on gas drilling concerns. He also indicated that County budget issues seem to get worse daily. Staff: Scott Doyle reported that the mail folder has information on the Conference for the Environment, held this year November 19-21 at West Point. He indicated he would follow up with the group regarding any EMC funds available for use in supporting membership attendance at this event.

**Member Items** – Brian Eden reported that the Ithaca Area Wastewater Treatment Plant Special Joint committee is preparing to approve the acceptance of alkaline hydrolysis waste from Cornell. He also noted that the ICLEI meeting discussed the fact that PACE funding to help advance energy improvements in residences is currently being threatened by the mortgage crisis.

**Mid-Year Re-Envisioning** – Dan Lamb asked the group for their feedback on how the restructured format of the EMC was working. He felt that there were positive improvements that would help raise the profile of the EMC, and wanted to hear what others felt. Sarah Adams indicated that it would be nice to be able to track issues the EMC is involved with in order to get a sense of impact. Dan referred back to the established flow chart for deciding how to deal with various issues established earlier in the year. He also reiterated the importance of both bringing things to the Legislature and also reacting to direction from the Legislature. Peter Stein indicated that it is probably best to bring things to the Legislature. Dan stressed the importance of a two-way street. Brian Eden indicated that he recognized the ebb and flow of the EMC's energy and felt it worked well. Brian went on to say that we should have a plan to go out to other groups to help advance our work. Roger Segelken emphasized the importance of interacting with other groups. Katie Kelly asked that if anyone had additional comments they should direct them to any Executive Committee member or staff.

**Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Scott Doyle, Senior Planner  
Tompkins County Planning Department

Approved by Council on September 15, 2010