

TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

**November 17, 2008
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present (15): John Andersson (Associate), Liz Cameron, Carol Chock, Barry Goodrich, Roxy Johnston, Joan Jurkowich, Dan Karig, Dooley Kiefer (Associate), Darby Kiley, Rick Manning, Todd Miller (Ex-Officio), Frank Proto, Elaine Quaroni (Associate), Nick Schipanski, Craig Schutt, Mary Shelley, Linda Wagenet, Roger Yonkin

Members Excused (2): Cindy Schulte, Bud Shattuck

Members Absent (3): Ed Bugliosi, Dan Konowalow, Paul Tunison

Staff Present (1): Kathy Wilsea (T C Planning Dept.)

Guests Present (12): Sharon Anderson, Martha Brodhead, Jack Edmonds, Jim Eyster, Susan Eyster, Pat Foster, Jim Kerrigan, Rick Kessy, Amber Nolder, Joyce Putnam, Lyle Raymond, Marjory Rinaldo-Lee

Chairman Frank Proto called the meeting to order at 4:19 PM.

Agenda Review and Approval of Minutes – There were no changes to the agenda. The draft minutes of September 15th and October 20th were moved by Mary Shelley and seconded by Barry Goodrich. Changes were submitted by Dan Karig for the October minutes, and by John Andersson and Carol Chock for the September minutes. Amended minutes approved by voice vote (Roxy Johnston abstained).

City of Ithaca Drinking Water Source Selection Process – TCPD Staff Comments on the draft Environmental Impact Statement – Copies of the Executive Summary of the dEIS were available in the mail folder. Joan Jurkowich said comments are being drafted by Planning Department staff. The existing system is over 100 years old. Two alternatives are being considered, and the dEIS examines both, with no preference identified. If the City purchases drinking water, TCPD wonders what will happen to the City property. Both alternatives go through Unique Natural Areas. No official selection will be recommended by TCPD. Dooley Kiefer pointed out the purchase option (including the construction phase) would use more electricity, so produce more greenhouse gas emissions. Roxy Johnston said Bolton Point is rated to treat 9 or 10 millions gallons daily. The City currently treats 4 to 4.5 MGD. One more public meeting will be held. The two philosophies are redundancy vs. shared services. Capacity is adequate in Sixmile Creek. Cornell also has a drinking water plant on Fall Creek. All are connected for some emergency services.

Water Use and Hydrocarbon Extraction – Rick Kessy, Manager of Fortuna Energy in Horseheads, was present. Fortuna is affiliated with Talisman Energy of Calgary, Canada, and has operated the office in Horseheads for six years. Fortuna is an “upstream” producer and would sell to NYSEG, not to individuals. Status of the gas exploration industry is on hold while the DEC develops a Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement. No permits are being issued in NY right now. Pennsylvania drilling is proceeding. He provided a map of the developable Marcellus Shale, noting that only part of Tompkins is developable. The fracturing system produces bores, then water is injected. The water gains some minerals in the process, just as precipitation that leaks through shale into area gorges does.

Wells are drilled in protected zones. The first casing is usually 100 feet and protects ground water. Compressed air is used to keep the drill clean. Pipe is cemented and a smaller casing is then inserted, drilling occurs to the next level and that casing is sealed. Next step is to drill vertically or horizontally. Only the Marcellus Shale level is exposed to frac fluid. Fracing occurs with water and sand in horizontal layers.

On the surface, a closed loop system is used. Fresh water and small amounts of bactericide (smaller percentage than used in a hot tub) are used. Numbers must be submitted to DEC. A biodegradable corrosion inhibitor is also used (a substance also used by landscapers). The fracing circuit operates 20 to 30 hours, pumping fresh water, sand and chemicals into the well. The fluid flows back under its own pressure and is taken to a licensed disposal center. The sand stays in the shale. Equipment is then cleared out in about four hours. Spacing is dictated by NYS. Vertical wells require 40 acres or more. Horizontal wells take up to 640 acres, and a development plan must be submitted to NYS. The zone of the Marcellus Shale we are in would not require pumping; gas flows out like an artesian well.

Carol Chock asked about hold harmless clauses in leases. Rick said Fortuna leases have verbiage to return the property to the state it was in or a state requested by the owner. Towns and counties sometimes ask for bond or damage repair clauses in leases. Fortuna conducts a baseline study of roads and bridges. They try to be good corporate citizens. They also survey landowners and check water wells, though that is not a DEC requirement. Dan Karig pointed out he is aware of one other company that drills water wells for followup testing. Rick said the industry is starting to reuse the water from the fracing process.

Fortuna uses a dehydrator, which can be located near the well, to remove moisture from the gas. Production volume is typically largest in year 1, then high in years 2 & 3, then may continue for 40 to 50 years. Joan asked about supply of the water for hydrofracing, and Rick said they are operating within the Susquehanna River basin and adequate supply is not a problem. Fortuna prefers to minimize trucking and use water from a close source. He sketched out a typical 640 acre drilling site, with DEC spacing guidelines for Marcellus. A five-acre equipment site is centrally located, and horizontal drilling makes 8 wells in an opposing pitchfork pattern. Because the horizontal wells are 600 feet from the next well and the drainage areas are 300 feet, this pattern can capture the bulk of the gas. Fortuna does not set up charges to induce fracturing or use any foams, which are used in other parts of the world.

Options for disposal of the fracing fluid include disposal at a licensed wastewater disposal site (Auburn has one for small quantities, or operators can transport to other states under EPA permits), subsurface disposal, or use of evaporation units. Drilling is conducted 24 hours a day, but there is not a lot of vehicular traffic. Following drilling, removal of frac fluid takes 2 to 3 days, when tanker trucks are refilled and leave one at a time, three or four vehicles per hour. Drilling takes about a month, vehicle traffic occurs for about a week, and Fortuna works with landowners on scheduling and compensation for any crop damage. After the water removal phase, there is light traffic for several months, then a well tender visits daily.

Vote on Slate for Membership Appointments – Craig Schutt distributed the recommended slate from the Nominating and Membership Committee. He is aware of one person who might apply for the agriculture seat, but was unable to attend tonight. Three members applied to become or remain associates, and associate membership will be offered to applicants not selected (Smith, Mawdsley, Rinaldo-Lee). Slate moved by Linda Wagenet, seconded by Roxy Johnston. Carol Chock asked about the application that was withdrawn by Jim Kerrigan. Mr. Kerrigan was present as a guest, and said he realized WRC is not a good fit for him. Slate approved by unanimous vote. Appointments will go to PDEQ and the County Legislature. Frank reminded members that vote for

officers will occur at the January meeting. Members who are interested in serving should contact Craig Schutt prior to the December WRC meeting.

Committee Reports – Cayuga Lake Recreation: Following last month’s short WRC meeting, the committee went to the Farmers Market and looked at a path by the planned Waterfront Trail. Rick Ferrel has suggesting getting a proposal to the City’s Board of Public Works for funding. Dan Karig said the committee is trying to get trees planted near Wegmans and Nate’s Floral Estates. Elaine Quaroni drafted a letter to Wegmans, which was distributed, amended, and approved for mailing with signature of Frank Proto. **Grants:** Craig Schutt reported the Environmental Protection Fund could be reduced under the NYS budget. It looks like no new initiatives will be funded unless the expanded bottle bill is approved in Albany. **WRC/CU Monitoring Plan:** Roxy Johnston said several presentations were made to conservation boards and town boards, and were well received. She might visit other municipalities in 2009. On 10/31 Cornell responded to DEC with the Before-After-Control-Impact (BACI) Study. New analysis was provided that avoids the Upstate Freshwater Institute/CU conflict. The only significant impact is in unconfirmed data. The full BACI is 94 pages, but the statistical analysis is only 9 pages. A presentation was made by UFI at the FLOWPA conference. The report is difficult to read, but the PowerPoint was great. Roxy will try to arrange for UFI to visit WRC next year, and will request permission to use the PowerPoint for public education purposes. Partnership meetings now have regular visitors from Wells College, Community Science Institute, the Floating Classroom, IAWWTP and CCE. Folks are really interested, and Roxy feels we need ways to inform the public. **Water Quality Strategy Update:** Joan Jurkowich reported then have met eight times since 8/1 and have three upcoming meetings scheduled. They will bring a draft of updated activities to WRC in December. Dooley Kiefer reminded us that public comment should be sought, and in the past we have held a public meeting in the evening on the WQS, but others commented previous public meetings were very poorly attended. **Wetlands:** Darby Kiley announced that committee chair Nick Schipanski and his wife had a baby girl last Tuesday.

Chair’s Report – Frank reminded committee chairs they need to draft reports for inclusion in the WRC Annual Report. A gas drilling forum for County advisory board members will be held 11/24 at 4 PM in the public Library. Today’s guest speaker, Rick Kessy, will be one of the speakers at the forum. The Community Science Institute stream monitoring proposal supported by WRC has made it through preliminary stages of the County budget. Final vote will be tomorrow night.

Staff Report – For members who were absent in October, Kathy Wilsea distributed copies of a report from Cindy Schulte on the Stormwater Coalition. Questions may be directed to Cindy.

Establish Meeting Dates for January & February, 2009 – Due to conflicts with holidays, it was agreed these meetings will be held on 4th Mondays.

Announcements/Other Business – Frank asked Roxy Johnston about the “group of professors and graduate students” mentioned in the October minutes. Roxy said they are addressing questions on phosphorus. They are not part of the WRC/CU Monitoring Plan Committee and do not speak for WRC. This is class work, and an opportunity for graduate students to get involved. They may become a resource for WRC.

Adjournment -- The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Planning Department Secretary
Adopted by the Council on December 15, 2008.