

Broome County Environmental Management Council

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



Broome County Office Building • 44 Hawley Street • P.O. Box 1766 • Binghamton, New York 13902
(607) 778-2116 • Fax (607) 778-6051 • Website: www.gobroomecounty.com

Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC) Notes from the meeting held Thursday, April 3, 2008 United Way Board Room, Jensen Road, Vestal, NY

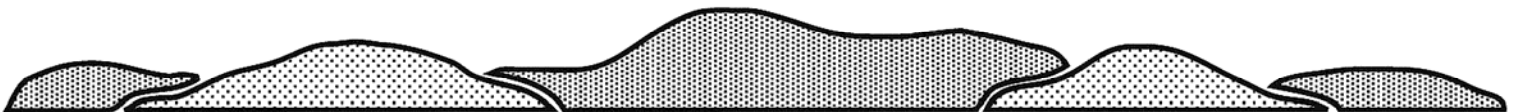
Present:

Members-at-Large: André LaClair, Doug Garner, Chris Burger, Julia Hoover and Tony Lubzanski
Student Reps: Josephine Chu (BU)
CAC Reps: Cindy Westerman (Vestal)
Legislative Reps: Ron Keibel (11th District)
Ex-Officio Reps: Bob Denz (BC Health)
Staff/Intern: Stacy Merola, Beth Egitto and Brittany Gaddy
Associate Members: Bill Heaviside
Visitors/Guests: Dylan Horvath and Kris Lau
Absent with Excuse: Karen Ciatyk, Kevin Mathers, Mary Cronk and Erin Heard

1. André **convened** the meeting at **7:10 pm**. Chris moved, Cindy seconded to approve March minutes. Motion carried.

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

- A Visioning Workshop for a local Sustainability Center will be held Saturday April 12, 1-4 pm, Decker Room, BC Library, Binghamton.
- Earth Fest 2008 is Saturday April 26 at Roberson Museum, 30 Front St, Binghamton. The EMC's volunteer sign-up sheet was circulated again. EMC will have table at the Fest.
- Chris noted that he will give a Zero Waste presentation at 12 pm at Earth Fest 2008.
- The 2008 Joyce K.L. Smith Environmental Photography Show & Competition Open Reception will be Wednesday, May 7 from 5:30-7:30 pm at the County Library on Court St., Binghamton. There were 356 entries; over 50 local high school students entered. Local professional photographers juried the show.
- Farm Days at the Mall will be April 4-6 at the Oakdale Mall, Johnson City.
- Broome Community College's spring 2008 Convocation Day is Tuesday, April 15. The theme is sustainability. The keynote speaker is author Elizabeth Kolbert who will speak at 11am in the West Gymnasium. All are welcome to attend! Campus parking is available. More information about Student Convocation day is available at the website, www.sunybroome.edu/studentconvocation/.
- Copies of the NYS Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) regulations offered.
- Copies of the 2007 EMC Annual Report distributed. Per the Council's request, the report's five major category headers were underlined for visual clarity. The report is posted on the EMC's webpages of the County website: <http://www.gobroomecounty.com/planning/PlanningEMC.php>.
- Boscov's Department Store will host a "Green" event April 12, 11-3 pm. EMC and Solid Waste staff will participate.
- Educational materials about vernal pools and amphibian identification were circulated, they were sent by the Upper Susquehanna Coalition.
- Julia learned that Sam's Club is selling small windmills, and they can retrofit your house to be eco-friendly with solar panels. The cost is about \$44,000.
- Bob Denz announced that National Public Health Week is April 7-13; the theme is climate change. For more information: www.nphw.org. Bob wrote a guest viewpoint for the Press & Sun-Bulletin to run during the week's celebration.
- Chris noted that the Transportation Sub-committee of the County's Energy Advisory Board (EAB) is looking for participants. The sub-committee is interested in ways that the County could improve transportation from a



climate change perspective. General EAB meetings are the second Tuesday of every month in the County Office Building.

3. Video Presentation: The Story of Stuff

- The Story of Stuff is a 20-minute educational video that examines the environmental and social impacts of the global materials economy. Annie Leonard studied the topic over a ten year period to answer questions about where “things” come from and where they go when discarded. She presents a summary of our stuff that moves along five stages of the global materials economy from extraction to production to distribution to consumption and lastly to disposal.

At the extraction phase, the world is running out of resources. The Story notes that in the US alone, five percent of the world’s population uses thirty percent of the world’s resources. At the production phase, toxic chemicals are used to make products. There are over 100,000 synthetic chemicals, only a handful of which have been tested. None have been tested for synergistic health impacts, meaning, what happens when they interact with other chemicals that we are exposed to daily. In the distribution phase, the real costs of a given product are externalized, meaning, they are not captured in the price to producer it. The fourth stage, consumption, is the most important part of the materials economy. Two strategies geared towards consumption are planned obsolescence, making products fall apart quickly so consumers have to buy more, and perceived obsolescence, when a consumer throws away a useful, working product in order to buy a newer one. Advertising is an important component of perceived obsolescence. The last stage is disposal; in the U.S. every person produces four and a half pounds of garbage each day! Incinerating garbage can create super toxins, such as Dioxin. Recycling is very important but it is not enough. For every garbage can that you produce, 70 garbage cans are needed to produce the stuff you are throwing away.

To conclude, the global materials economy is a system in crisis with lots of limits such as climate change and declining happiness and wellness. However, there are many points of intervention from working to protect environmental resources to working to on labor rights and fair trade, for example, to create a more sustainable and equitable world and economy. Zero-waste, closed-loop production, and renewable energy are just a few of the new school’s of thinking to help resolve the growing predicament.

A group discussion followed. Annie Leonard’s video and more information can be found at the website, www.thestoryofstuff.com.

- 4. The council decided to **skip the break**.

5. Committee Reports’

Natural Resources Committee (NRC): Beth reported on Karen’s behalf. The Upper Susquehanna Coalition is working on letters to NYS representatives to ban phosphate from dishwasher detergent (it is already banned from laundry detergent). They are also re-starting the Headwater River Trail initiative as part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateway River Trail (through the National Park Service). Beth and Gail Domin, from the Planning Department, will attend a meeting Friday, April 11.

- The committee reviewed maps that Doug English, GIS Administrator, created for the Open Space Plan; biodiversity, water resources, working landscapes and distinctive character. Bill’s Recommendations Section for Distinctive Character was also reviewed.
- The committee discussed a draft resolution Calling For Environmental Standards Governing All Wood Burning Devices and Legislation To Protect Public Air Quality From Wood Burning Emissions, but no action was taken. Revisions will be made and discussed at the next meeting. **Next meeting**: Thursday, April 17 at 4:30 pm, BCOB.

Recycling & Waste Management Committee (RWMC): Stacy reported that the RWMC met March 24. A photograph of what appears to be speckles on a wall was circulated; it is a picture of 426,000 cell phones that

are retired daily in the U.S. The image was part of an art exhibit at Ithaca College called *Running the Numbers: An American self-portrait*.

- The County Legislature approved a resolution from the Division of Solid Waste Management (DSWM) to jointly market and sell Broome County landfill carbon credits with Broome Energy Resources, LLC. The contract is still under negotiation.
- The Legislature also adopted the Findings Statement for the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Section IV entrance evaluation. The County will now pursue modification to the Part 360 Landfill Operating permit now that the entrance analysis is complete. The Landfill CAC will meet April 28 with DSWM and DPW to discuss further mitigation measures for Dunham Hill and Knapp roads.
- The NYS Solid Waste Management Plan will be updated this year. There exists a possibility that regional composting facilities will be encouraged. It was noted that NYS may consider a ban on food waste in landfills.
- Material Recovery Manager, Debra Smith attended a Sierra Club meeting in February to speak about recycling in Broome County. The Sierra Club published a summary of her presentation of which Debra had a few corrections: frozen food containers (boxes) can be recycled. Also, there is no recycling drop off for Household Hazardous Waste. Debra called the author of similar article to make corrections for the record.
- The Bottle Bill was included in the New York State 2008-2009 Executive Budget. The EMC's 2007 compromise letter for the Bigger Better Bottle Bill was noted, but no action was taken to re-issue a similar letter again this year from RWMC. **ACTION ITEM:** Chris moved, Cindy seconded, to re-issue the EMC's 2007 compromise letter for a bottle bill. Motion carried.
Next meeting: Monday, May 19, 4:30pm, BCOB.

6. Conservation Advisory Commission (CAC) Reports

Vestal CAC: Cindy reported the CAC met twice since the last EMC meeting; once to finalize the draft creeks report, and second to share the report with Town Supervisor, Pete Andreasen who found the report favorable. Pete will share it with the Town Board. The CAC plans to meet again with the Supervisor in April to conclude discussion about the creek report.

- The CAC also discussed the proposed McGowan development. She'd like to have other boards involved to set up a meeting with McGowan. Developers for the senior development off of Rte 26 appear to have damaged an area near the creek. The CAC discussed the issue but took no action. The proposed Bunn Hill student apartments and potential environmental problems were also discussed. The CAC wrote a letter to the Town Board requesting that the action be declared as Type 1 under SEQR. The CAC received report about a proposed Plaza Drive development; there are buffer issues with the apartments and houses on Plaza Drive.
Next meeting: Tuesday, April 22 at Vestal Town Hall. 7 pm

7. Staff and Chair Reports

- An NRC meeting has been added to the EMC calendar for May 15.
- The parking garage under Government Plaza is going to be revamped; EMC has been advised to find a new location for committee meetings starting in June. Stacy proposed the Broome County Public Library; she has reserved the exhibit room upstairs for June and July committee meetings. The new time for committee meetings will be 4:00 pm. Bob suggested the Broome County Health Department meeting room as an alternative location.
- Beth will view a webcast April 7 – a summit with the NYS Comptroller and the NYSDEC Commissioner.

8. Next meeting: Thursday, May 1 at 7:00 pm, United Way Board Room, Vestal.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Brittany Gaddy, recorder
Stacy Merola and Beth Egitto, editors