

Broome County Environmental Management Council

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



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Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC) Minutes from the meeting held Thursday, June 5, 2008 United Way Board Room, Jenson Road, Vestal, NY

Present:

Members-at-Large: André LaClair, Tony Lubzanski, Julia Hoover, Erin Heard, and Karen Ciatyk

CAC Reps: Cindy Westerman (Vestal)

Legislative Reps: Ron Keibel

Associate Members: Bill Heaviside

Staff/Intern: Stacy Merola and Beth Egitto

Visitors/Guests: Laura Lee Intscher

Absent with Excuse: Mary Cronk, Bob Denz, Doug Garner, Kevin Mathers, Chip McElwee, Terry Woodnorth and Chris Burger

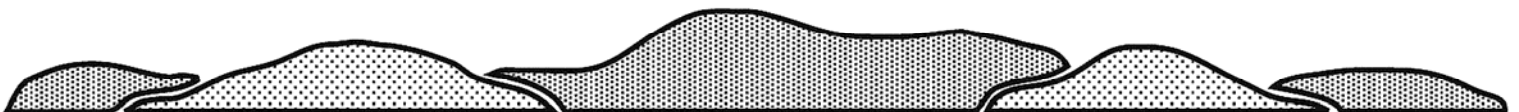
1. Andre **convened** the meeting at **7:10 pm**. Introductions followed. Julia moved, Karen seconded to adopt minutes from May after correction of a typo in the first sentence: change “March” to “April”. Motion carried.

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

- The NYS Association of EMCs (NYSAEMC) annual program update meeting with the NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation (DEC) will be Monday June 9 at DEC headquarters, Albany. EMC staff will attend.
- The DEC and NYS Dept of Health (DOH) and will hold a public meeting and info session June 11, 7pm, UEHS to discuss the proposed remedial measures (thermal treatment) for soil and groundwater contamination at the Former Ideal Cleaners site on North St, Endicott.
- The EMC’s Joyce K.L. Smith Environmental Photography Show and Competition is on display with other education materials in the BC Library through June 27.
- Volunteers are needed for the BC Book Recycling Fair August 14, 15, 16 (collection days) and 22 and 23. (giveaway days) for three-hour shifts from 9 am until 3 pm each day. Tasks include lifting, sorting, traffic control, book checkout and restocking. Contact EMC staff who are coordinating volunteer registrations. Register by July 25
- It came to Andre’s attention that a national retail store’s nursery discards old ornamentals and organics in the trash rather than compost them. He asked if there is any way to encourage composting of their rejects.
- Cindy attended Lobby Day in Albany recently to address wetlands with the Sierra Club. She spoke to DEC about mapping, and noted that the same bill to expand the protection threshold

Guest Presentation: Environmentally Responsible Architecture: Strength – Function - Beauty

Laura Lee Intscher, Architect and proprietor of Secret Base Design in Vestal, NY practices what she preaches. Secret Base Design specializes in straw bale construction (Laura Lee teaches straw-bale construction at BCC) and has experience with passive solar, geothermal & wood heating. Laura Lee lives in an eco-friendly home that she designed that uses not only eco-friendly products like insulation, flooring, and countertops, most of which were produced and locally or regionally, but it also uses green technologies (straw-bale construction, geothermal heating/cooling, solar and wind power sources) with a bit of traditional systems. Her designs reflect creativity with space, minimization of product use, and sustainable materials that inspire, protect and delight us.



Laura Lee highlighted some basics about green design and building principles and compared them to conventional construction practices. Enormous amounts of fossil fuels are consumed to get your products, for example; the construction waste generated usually gets landfilled. Structures are not as durable as they were 100 years ago. The products we purchase to build with and place in our homes have significant potential for creating indoor pollutants that can impact quality of life. She discussed reuse versus building new; it's easier to demolish then build new than it is to reuse.

She feels strongly that there needs to be financial incentives especially for the private sector to encourage more sustainable building and eventually, net-zero energy building. Laura feels that most government sponsored programs don't go far enough in terms the maximum energy efficiencies that can be realized. She noted that the Energy Star Program achieves only 15% above what minimum code requires, which could be better. She envisions low-cost green (straw-bale) housing in our future, and feels that education is crucial to advance these concepts to realities.

Laura Lee offered several resources for further information. A brief question and answer period followed.

3. Council skipped the break.

4. Committee Reports:

Natural Resources Committee (NRC) – Karen reported there was no May meeting. **Next meeting:** Thurs., June 19 at 4pm, Exhibit Room, BC Library.

Recycling & Waste Management Committee (RWMC) – Stacy reported that May's meeting was cancelled. **Next meeting:** Mon., June 23 at 4pm, Exhibit Room, BC Library.

5. Conservation Advisory Commission (CAC) Reports:

Vestal – Cindy reported they met Tues May 27. Concerns about the Bunn Hill Rd Campus Crest proposal were expressed and reactions discussed. All CAC concerns were brought up at the Planning Board meeting. A member plans to compile information about the potential consequences of an Emerald Ash Borer infestation, which currently threatens portions of NYS. They also plan to issue a statement about natural gas drilling to the Town. **Next Meeting:** Tues, June 24 at 7:30pm, Vestal Town Hall.

6. Staff & Chair Reports:

- Beth incorporated amendments to the EMC's Outdoor Burning letter, resolution and white paper as EMC requested, which was sent May 20. It was also sent to additional contacts as suggested (DOH, Senate Envi and Health Committees). Council received a response from Assemblyman Crouch's office agreeing with our concerns. He noted that they'll only increase with the rising cost of home heating fuels and suggested that the County pass a local law to require a permit to install a wood boiler, which could also address set backs and nuisance issues to alleviate citizen complaints.
- The EMC's Bottle Bill compromise letter was sent to officials today; copies were circulated.
- The DEC and NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation are compiling the draft NYS Open Space Plan. Regional committees met in spring to compile their recommendations. A draft will be available for public review this fall or winter.
- The BC Stormwater Management Plan Annual Report ('07-'08) is posted on the County's website under Planning Dept's Publications page. At public meeting was held May 15; no one attended.
- Former EMC member Ruth Weber passed away unexpectedly May 21. Stacy made an expression of sympathy and offered condolences to her family on behalf of the EMC. Cindy attended her memorial service. She will be dearly missed.

- July guest speaker: gas drilling expert or proposed compost operation in Kirkwood? Most were in favor of hearing about drilling. Many are concerned about potential water quality impacts. Ron suggested we contact Lindsay Wickham of the NY Farm Bureau. Stacy offered to share some video clips that have been circulating about natural gas drilling and potential impacts.
- Beth Egitto was offered the position of full-time Planner with the Planning Dept. She will take a leave of absence from the Environmental Analyst effective June 16. Congratulations Beth!! The Planning Commissioner indicated that we intend to fill her vacancy.

7. Next meeting: Thurs, July 10 at 7pm, United Way Board Room, Jensen Road, Vestal.

The meeting **adjourned at 9:45 pm.**

S. Merola, recorder