



February 17, 2010
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDANCE: **Joy Brewer**, NYSDEC; **Roger Burlew**, Town of Erin; **Jennifer Fais**, STCRPDB; **Diane Fiorentino**, Stormwater Coalition; **Richard Gunderman**, County Legislator; **Dick Kankus**, citizen; **Paul Kingsbury**, Town of Elmira, EMC; **Dennis Rathbun, Jr.**, County Health Department; **Gene Stow**, Farm Bureau; **Jennifer Trimber**, (CC EMC); **Mark Watts**, SWCD; **Bill Winkky**, Town of Veteran.

1. Call to order and Communications – Mark Watts called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM in the Big Flats Community Center.
2. Approval of the January 20, 2010 minutes – On a motion by Diane Fiorentino, seconded by Dick Gunderman, the committee approved the minutes as written.
3. Member Reports

Jennifer Trimber, EMC said that she attended the SRBC meeting on water quality monitoring, held February 15. She understood that 30 monitoring stations would be placed in the Susquehanna/Chemung Basins with 10 sites in New York State. SRBC needs 50 – 100 mile subwatersheds that would drain to a monitoring station location. Each station costs \$20,000 each.

Diane Fiorentino talked with Mike Brownell and understood that only one site is located in New York at this time. \$750,000 was obtained from a gas company while \$250,000 was contributed by SRBC. SRBC is still looking for funding to add more stations. There are gas companies that are interested in supporting this network. Go to www.srbc.net/programs/remotenetwork.htm

Joy Brewer reported that Scott Rodabaugh is the regional spills engineer in Avon as of the end of January. DEC is discussing replacing Scott. In the interim, Jim Lynch is picking up most of Scott's work and Jessica Verrigni will provide stormwater assistance. Jim Lynch or Joy Brewer will attend the water quality committees. Scott has a year to decide if he wants to come back.

Joy Brewer reported on the flood map situation – she reported that the FEMA contractors have been preparing working maps since October 2009 and never contacted Scott Rodabaugh or DEC for input. As everyone saw in the paper, there is great concern about the maps since they place a very large portion of Elmira in the floodplain. This would require residents to obtain flood insurance. DEC is still hoping to get the levees certified and work with FEMA on the maps.

The draft map will be issued this fall with a 90-day comment period. However, there is such concern about the working maps that Mike Smith and Tom Santulli will call a press conference soon. Bill Nechamen, DEC Flood Control, has been trying to get FEMA to come out to Chemung County to discuss the working maps. So far, there has been no word from FEMA. DEC has provided all inspection reports and other documentation. Apparently, FEMA needs a guarantee in writing that levees will withstand a 100-year flood. We expect that a Corps of Engineers or Albany DEC signature would be appropriate. The City of Binghamton is in the same spot as Elmira and we are surprised that they have not raised concerns. Joy pointed out that twenty-five percent of flood damage claims happen outside of the designated flood plain.

Jennifer Fais, STC, told the group that the Susquehanna / Chemung Action Plan is underway. The first meeting was January 29 as part of the Upper Susquehanna Coalition meeting. The purpose is to create an Ecosystem-based Management Plan that balances the natural environment with economic development. This plan is different because implementation recommendation will be built into existing plans. These include the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy which lists all economic development projects that require funding. Jennifer will report to the group as the program proceeds.

Dick Kankus said that he was chagrined that FEMA would have created these maps without understanding the water situation in Pine City and Southport. He stated that the levee protects people from Seeley Creek, not the river. Dick supports Mike Smith and Tom Santulli as they try to get answers.

Diane Fiorentino, Chemung County Stormwater Coalition, showed the group the two 60-second stormwater commercials that have been produced. One is aimed toward the homeowner. The second is targeted at developers and contractors. These will air in March, April, and May then again in September, October, and November. She hopes this will prompt contractors to get trained by April 30 so that they will meet the May 1 deadline for certification. The commercial will air in a fifteen-county viewing area in New York and Pennsylvania. Diane thanked Jessica Verrigni for composing most of the text. Diane did most of the camera work.

Dick Gunderman said that the Finger Lakes RC&D has been phased out of the president's budget for 2011. He encouraged all groups to modify Dick Winnett's boiler plate letter and fax and mail them in. On a motion by Dick Gunderman, seconded by Roger Burlew, the Water Quality Committee voted to send a support letter.

Mark Watts, Chemung County SWCD, thanked Roger Burlew for putting up "Right to Farm" signs in the Town of Erin. He feels that the county Agricultural Protection Plan is coming along. He stated that Fennel Recycling is closed in Elmira Heights; thus, tires collected during the tire recycling day will have to go to Seneca Meadows. Tire recycling day is May 15. They will not take tractor tires. He needs to obtain a sign-off from DEC that this is not considered waste hauling, but rather a collection day.

Mark said that he is working with the Town of Horseheads to restore the levee built in the 70s. They are removing trees to improve the structure.

4. Old Business:

Natural Gas update – Mark Watts said that the county was in the process of forming the Natural Energy Solutions Commission which would address all forms of energy being considered for development in the county. This structure is being proposed to the county legislature committee and will be voted on the second of Monday of March. Andy Fagan, Cooperative Extension, and Mark Watts will co-chair the Commission. Jennifer Trimber is the staff. The EMC suggested that they would like to send several people on a rotating basis. Tom Santulli has requested one designated person. The business representative and at-large members are still “up in the air.” He said that there are a number of energy coalitions starting up around the area and that the Upper Susquehanna Coalition is talking about holding a workshop to invite these coalitions to talk about how they got started and how they are progressing. Jennifer Fais said that the Southern Tier Central Board’s PRAC Committee is also inviting the three county coalitions to talk about regional issues. Both of these opportunities are chances for the coalitions to learn from each other.

5. New Business:

Roger Burlew said that the Town of Erin has approved the highway preservation law. It is now in place in the Town of Erin.

6. Next meeting – March 17, 2010 Big Flats Community Center 9:00 AM.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Fais