



St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council

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Approved

MEETING MINUTES

January 20, 2010 7:00 PM

Room 226, County Courthouse, 48 Court Street

Canton, New York

Action items in bold italics

- 1. Call to Order:** Chair David Katz called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.
- 2. Roll Call, Determination of Quorum:** A quorum was present.
Members present included: B. Flavin, R. Horst, A. Heidenreich, D. Howard, G. Johnson, D. Katz, D. Matthews, D. O'Shea, L. Perry, J. Rosales, L. Rudiger, P. Skomsky, A. Soutar, B. Zimmerman.
Members absent included: D. Church, T. Cutter.
Staff: J. Montan; J. Tenbusch, K. Zimmerman. Guests: J. Heidenreich, S. Rau, C. Rediehs. Press: None.
- 3. Hearings, Comments from the Public:** The speaker was Jon Rosales, EMC member and Assistant Professor in the Environmental Studies Department at St. Lawrence University. He spoke about United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen, Denmark, which he had attended along with several students from SLU.

Rosales provided some background information: the first Earth Summit occurred in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. 192 countries agreed to address climate change by stabilizing greenhouse gas emissions. An annual Conference of Participants (COP) has occurred since 1995. At the 1997 conference, held in Kyoto, Japan, an agreement was developed to reduce emissions by 5% from 1990 levels; a target date for this achievement was 2012. This Kyoto agreement was ratified in 2005; it was not signed by the US.

Rosales described a continual process of planning that has occurred; international ad hoc working groups have developed short-term and long-term strategies, negotiations, etc.; Rosales noted that these planning activities have helped to build a level of trust among international participants.

Rosales described some of the main points of the Copenhagen Accord, which was signed by the US and 28 other countries: this was a non-binding pledge to establish targets and lists of actions. One goal of the Accord is to limit future temperature rise to less than two

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degrees Centigrade. The Accord also commits \$100 billion by 2020 to finance climate change activities. The Accord will also continue the work of the ad hoc working groups.

Rosales presented some of the scientific findings he observed at the Copenhagen Framework Convention. According to the Hadley Center in England, extrapolating from present trends, the period from 2010 until 2020 will have temperatures equivalent to that experienced in 1998 – which was the warmest on record). Temperatures are predicted to rise 2°C sometime between 2035 and 2050. By 2060, temperatures are predicted to rise by 4°C.

Rosales stated that, based on current trends, our Earth is committed to significant dangerous global climate change. Without changing our current actions, temperatures will rise by more than 4°C. Even with current proposals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, temperatures will rise by almost 3.9°C. It is important to recall that the Rio de Janero Conference set a goal of eventual temperature rise of only 1.5°C.

Rosales concluded by saying that the international climate change process is broken. He suggested that other initiatives (local, regional) might be required in order to make much progress on the issue of climate change

Katz thanked Rosales for his presentation, and declared a ten-minute break. The meeting reconvened at 8:30 PM.

4. **Acceptance of Order of Business, Items for New Business, Items for Unfinished Business:** The Order of Business was approved by consensus.
5. **Approval of the Minutes of the November 18, 2009 Meeting:** The November Minutes were approved (Flavin, Soutar).
6. **Report by the Representative of the Board of Legislators (BOL):** Laura Perry reported:
 - The Board of Legislators has not agreed to raise sales tax in the County; this may be revisited if the County’s budget problems intensify.
 - An animal protection coalition is being formed.
 - The BOL has created a committee to work on issues of solid waste; this committee will address leachate issues, and also at models for communities to handle their own trash.
 - The River Valley Redevelopment Agency (RVRDA) is under consideration by the BOL. Perry had provided an EMC perspective to the BOL discussion on the issue. Perry reported that the BOL intends to get access to the NYPA funds, and then decide how it should be spent.
 - The BOL’s Information Technology committee will host a symposium in May to help deliver information to local organizations about IT issues.

a. Heidenreich reported that she and B. Zimmerman have information for the BOL regarding environmentally-supportive procurement policies. (See **Unfinished Business**.)
7. **Reports by EMC Members on Conversations with County Legislators:** None.

8. Report of the Committees:

a. **Executive** – D. Katz. No report.

b. **Education** – R. Horst. Horst asked J. Tenbusch to report:

- At a request from L. Perry, the Committee had discussed the request by D. Hassig to address the EMC about dioxin exposure reduction. The committee reviewed the e-mails and other materials sent in by Mr. Hassig. The committee decided that other, more knowledgeable speakers might be found to speak on this issue.
- Horst had spoken with organizers of the Norwood Recycling Center about how they operate. He will also observe the operation at the Colton transfer site.
- The Committee will develop a clean-up event in conjunction with Earth Day (April 22). The committee will work with other EMC members, interested members of the County Planning Board, and the public on this project.
- A request was made for an update concerning the allocation of hydropower in the North Country. Zimmerman gave a short summary of the River Valley Redevelopment Agency (RVRDA) negotiations.
- A report was made that Bion has received support from the Town of Schroepfel in Oswego County for a 74,000-head project.
- No speaker has been scheduled for the February EMC meeting.

c. **Natural Resources** – A. Heidenreich reported that:

- The committee had discussed the RVRDA negotiations, and recommended that the EMC ask the Board of Legislators to hold open publicly announced meetings, with publicly-available minutes taken, before the BOL might sign any agreement with NYPA. After some discussion, D. Katz asked for comments on the committee's motion. A. Heidenreich asked that there be more transparency in negotiations to establish the RVRDA. On a motion by Heidenreich (B. Zimmerman), the EMC asked Jon Montan of the Planning Office to draft a letter to the BOL expressing the EMC's concerns about holding public meetings.
- The committee had tabled until next month its discussion of a request for an environmental assessment comparing potential impacts of a USH 11 transportation corridor vs. a Rooftop Highway corridor.
- The committee tabled until next month its discussion about leases on land formerly owned by Champion Int'l.

d. **NYSAEMC** – No report.

9. Report of the Staff:

- J. Tenbusch reported on preparations made for the annual EMC Winter Camp at Raquette Lake, Feb. 12-14.
- Tenbusch also reported that the County Planning Office has begun to work on four applications for Community Development Block Grant funds.
- Tenbusch reported on the recent activities of the County's Complete Count Committee for the 2010 Census.

- K. Zimmerman reported that, increasingly, local governments are in financial distress. The County is reviewing any options that may be available.

10. Unfinished Business:

- Ad Hoc Committee on Procurement: A. Heidenreich and B. Zimmerman reported that they have spoken with M. Cunningham of the County's Governmental Services office about procurement policies; they are ready to draft a "green" procurement policy for the County. L. Perry suggested that the ad hoc committee ask the BOL for permission to proceed. It was proposed that the ad hoc committee make a presentation to the BOL Operations Committee. K. Zimmerman suggested that Heidenreich and B. Zimmerman prepare a 1-2 page report that summarizes the problems with the County's current procurement policy.

11. New Business:

- On a motion by L. Rudiger (B. Flavin), the EMC approved its 2010 Work Plan
- J. Montan reported that the Vermont Air National Guard expects to receive new F-35A fighters to replace the F-16 jets used in military overflight training. There will be public meetings and more information on this matter.
- K. Zimmerman reported that Richard Grover (St. Lawrence Valley Environmental Coalition) had proposed to the BOL that the EMC review environmental projects that will come before the (future) RVRDA. Zimmerman noted that there had been no Planning Office staff involvement with that proposal.

12. Announcements:

- J. Montan announced that 2 Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days will be scheduled in 2010 on May 15th in Canton, and on August 7th in Ogdensburg. These will also include collection of unused pharmaceuticals.
- Montan also announced that Kinney's Drugs plans to hold a collection for unused pharmaceuticals on April 24th at its Potsdam store, but the decision to do so is not yet final.
- K. Zimmerman announced that proposed budget cuts by the State may result in the closing of the Adirondack Visitor Interpretive Centers (Paul Smiths, Newcomb) by 2011.

- 13. Message to Board of Legislators:** Please discuss tonight's presentation on climate change with your Legislator. You might thank him/her for the BOL decision to participate in the ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability analysis of greenhouse gas emissions in the County.

The meeting adjourned at 9:27 PM.

Minutes prepared by J. Tenbusch; J. Montan

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