

Shawangunk Environmental Management Council Minutes 4/13/21

present: Andrew Domenech, Dave Haldeman (chair), Steve Landsman, Patty Lee Parmalee (scribe), JoAnnWarren

Dave H. announces that he is inviting Sean Murphy to the next EMC meeting to discuss the high-school science curriculum on climate, and the school practices re: recycling, and activism.

Easements:

It is time for EMC members to monitor the town-held conservation easements. Anyone who needs help with access should ask Heather, assistant to Town Clerk now in charge of easements, for a contact phone number.

Solar issues:

The town still has no battery storage law, and no one can install one until there is a law. Town attorney is suggesting to John Valk that there should be a moratorium until a law is passed, and the law must include disposal methods (like the solar law).

EMC role in new development projects:

Members present feel the EMC should evaluate small projects, not just large ones.

This would be non-binding and done only at the request of the homeowner. Such an evaluation might enhance the value of the property by pointing out significant environmental factors which need to be considered in development plans. The EMC has already submitted a letter to John Valk and John and the town attorney have several concerns about our approach. The town attorney said he could approach Mark Watkins to see if the EMC might get the opportunity to evaluate ALL development requests which come before the board. Under the current system, the EMC only evaluates properties upon request from the Planning Board.

Rail Trail:

Our Watchtower neighbors would have graded the rail trail, but then Covid-19 happened. Dave H. will suggest to John Valk that he ask them again.

County issues:

Dave H. reported that the main issues discussed related to northern Ulster County, namely dumping of silt from the Ashokan into the Esopus (a disaster for any business depending on pristine nature), and the disruptions caused by laying pipe in the Hudson for Champlain Hudson Power Express to bring power downstate.

Clean energy opt-ins:

Patty P. thinks we should find ways to clarify how the different options work.

Steve L. announces the Dutchess BOCES summit on sustainability on zoom that evening, featuring The Cloud Institute for Sustainability Education, and a keynote by a Wallkill High School speaker.

Next meeting:  
suggested date is June 8.