

St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council
49½ Court Street, Canton, New York 13617-1169
Phone: (315) 379-2292 Fax: (315) 379-2252
E-mail: Planning@stlawco.org
Web Site: <http://www.stlawco.org/Planning/EMC.htm>

MEETING MINUTES
November 18, 2020 6:00 PM
Via ZOOM

Action items in bold italics / Motions underlined.

- 1. Call to Order:** In the absence of the Chair, Tenbusch called the meeting to order at 6:05pm.
- 2. Roll Call, Determination of Quorum:** *A quorum was not present initially, was achieved during the presentation.*
Member present: Catherine Bennett, *Chair* (arrived late); Richard Marshall; Sue Rau; Tiernan Smith; Nicole Terminelli, *BOL Liaison*; Rod Tozzi; Brian Washburn; Pat Whalen, *Secretary*.
Members absent: David Barnes; Aaron Barrigar; Jennifer Berbrich; Joseph Brant; Ryan Burkum; Donald O'Shea, *Vice-Chair*.
Guests: Emily Sheridan, DEC; EMC Member Candidates: Lukas Hans; Dustin Bowman; Herb Bullock; Tyson Terpstra; Mark Deon.
Staff: John Tenbusch; Dakota Casserly.

EMC open Board positions: Interested candidates introduced themselves and provided information as to why they are interested in serving on the EMC.

- 3. Acceptance of Order of Business, Items for New Business, Items for Unfinished Business**
No action taken due to lack of quorum
- 4. Approval of the Minutes of the July, October 2020 EMC Meetings:** Minutes could not be approved, due to lack of quorum.
- 5. Hearings, Comments from the Public:**
Presentation by Casserly: A discussion on small scale solar projects, 2-5 MWs, summary of recent County Planning Board (CPB) reviews and power grid interconnection and queue.
Casserly summarized how a land use project is referred to the CPB, how they review it, and, ultimately make a decision to approve or deny. He reported that almost all referred solar projects in the 2-5MW range have been approved, with conditions, by the CPB. The first denial of a solar project occurred at their last meeting in November.

Some of the common conditions that are part of the approval process are:

- Avoiding prime farmland and wetlands,
- continuation of an agricultural use (small livestock grazing),
- clearing forests,
- minimize access road(s) impacts,
- provide an operational and maintenance plan,
- comprehensive decommissioning plans,
- utility interconnection plan, and,
- a project timeline.

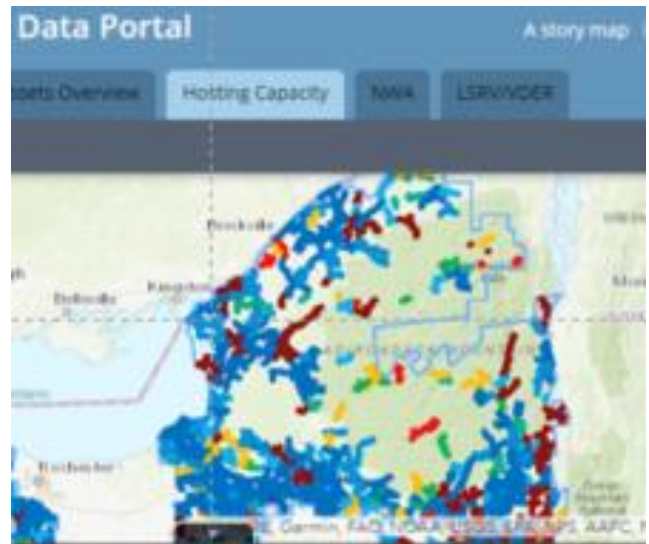
Casserly also talked about renewable energy (wind, solar, and battery) local laws and which towns have them.

In regards to interconnection and the queue, Casserly reported that the NYS Dept. of Public Service (DPS), in coordination with utility companies, make the rules and track the process for all ≤ 5 MW photovoltaic (solar) projects in the state. The tracking inventory is updated monthly and downloadable (see link below). The NY Independent System Operator (NYISO) manages interconnection and queue for all projects > 5 MW.

Dakots continued with a discussion about interconnection and the queue work in parallel to a degree, after the Standardized Interconnection Requirement ((SIR) Initial application) is completed and submitted a project is placed in the queue. A project has to meet certain milestones to hold its place in the queue and if interconnection is not viable, usually due to electric infrastructure (distributed generation 3 phase power lines and substations) investment, a project is dropped out of the queue.

However, project developers can join forces to cost share infrastructure needs and therefore re-enter the queue to move the projects forward. Furthermore, National Grid provides interactive web-based hosting capacity maps (see link below) to help the public and project developers explore potential solar development sites. These maps show distributed generation (DG) infrastructure (lines and substations) and specific capacity information. Also, it was noted that some projects that are to be sited far from DG infrastructure are exploring interconnecting to transmission infrastructure (lines and substations) and this is more expensive.

Bullock asked about the micro grid, safety concerns with battery storage, and what is the EMC's role with solar development in the county. Tenbusch responded that the EMC acts in an advisory role.



There was a question about how municipalities regulate these projects with local laws. Tenbusch talked about how they have the power to regulate land uses, not the County. Jefferson County has more of a land use regulatory role because towns have given it this authority.

Smith, Tozzi, and, Deon asked about economic development in the County. Some particulars were: how high taxes make it challenging for developers and how would solar development change after the recent election. Also, they wanted to know how the county residents would benefit from these projects.

Bowman talked about his experience in developing community solar projects in Vermont and bringing together stakeholders in such projects.

Washburn asked about decommissioning plans and PILOTS (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) and how developers are handling. Casserly responded that most projects are addressing these in their applications, some are more robust than others.

- Links:
 - Tracking inventory: www3.dps.ny.gov/W/PSCWeb.nsf/All/286D2C179E9A5A8385257FBBF003F1F7E
 - National Grid New York System Data Portal: <http://arcg.is/OGqvm4>

6. Report by the Representative of the Board of Legislators (Nicole Terminelli)

- a. Renewed contract with Gary Bowich regarding liability releases for environmental cleanup of tax auction properties.
- b. At the November 11th, Operations Committee meeting, Jason Pfothauer gave an update on progress of Lead Grant project.
 - i. Terpstra asked about asbestos abatement.
 1. Tenbusch responded that it is expensive and not required by the state for homeowner repair, however for a contractor it is required.
 2. Terminelli talked about how it can be covered and provided examples.

7. Reports by EMC Members on Conversations with County Legislators

- a. Tenbusch asked about discontinuing this action and the Board will discuss at a future meeting.

8. Report of the Committees

- a. **Executive:** No Report
- b. **Conservation of Resources Committee:** See attached.
 - i. Bennett said the group talked about plastic reduction, especially plastic sliver wear.
 - ii. Rau said reusable wooden utensils should be considered for sale.
 - iii. Tenbusch talked about sustainable holiday shopping promotion, reusable utensils, and would the EMC like to put their name on this.
- c. **Environment and the Economy Committee:** See attached.
 - i. Tenbusch summarized committee report.
 - ii. Tenbusch asked how the committee can bridge the divide between the environment and economy.

- iii. Sheridan shared her thoughts on Nature Conservancy tree program grants.
 1. This Urban Forestry Sustainability Initiative might be a good project for the committee to pursue:
www.sleloinvasives.org/initiatives/urbanforestsustainability/
 - iv. Next committee meeting is 12/16 @ 6pm.
 - d. **Invasive Species Committee:** See attached.
 - i. Rau gave the Committee report.
 - e. **Watershed Management Committee:** See attached.
 - i. Washburn talked about the SLRWP (St. Lawrence River Watershed Project) report coming in December.
 - ii. Rau asked about obtaining a copy of Washburn's comments on the Project.
9. **Report of the Staff**
- Tenbusch talked about the Planning Office staffing arrangements going to half-staff.
10. **Unfinished Business**
- a. Tenbusch said that the EMC 50th year commemoration is upcoming and he is looking for ideas.
 - i. Should the EMC include a community involvement component in its planning?
11. **New Business:** None
12. **Announcements**
- a. Rau thanked all who involved with the November 6th plaque designation for her husband and former long-time EMC member, Andy Soutar. Thirteen people attended and it was a very nice event. A special thanks to Pat Whalen about plaque design.
 - b. Sheridan shared an event: Great Lakes Action agenda webinar, Regional Research network, sustainability theme
 - c. Washburn cited data about homes in SLC being built before 1980 and it's common that drywall contains asbestos.
13. **Message to Board of Legislators:** None.
14. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Patrick Whalen

Patrick Whalen, Secretary

Minutes drafted by Dakota Casserly