

Esopus Environmental Board Minutes
February 15, 2023 Meeting Via Zoom

Present:

Chairman Mark Ellison
Climate Smart Chairperson Laura Petit
Chris DeCicco
Ellie Gartenstein
Lee Gough
Noel Russ (7:12 p.m.)

Also Present:

Town Council Liaison Evelyn Clarke

Excused: Nina Nichols & Cynthia McVay

Meeting commenced at 7:02 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS:

Meeting Minutes – December 2022 minutes moved to approve by Mark Ellison, seconded by Lee Gough. Upon Motion of Mark Ellison, seconded by Lee Gough, the January 2023 minutes were approved.

Board Membership – Chris Baker was once again welcomed for attending. Ms. Baker had provided an application to serve and Mark Ellison provided her information via screen share. Ms. Baker addressed the Members of the EB and provided a brief history of her education and background. She currently operates a shop on the Kingston waterfront dealing with environmental education and nature. Ms. Baker was creating a platform to share information.

Ulster County EMC Update – No December 2022 nor January 2023 meetings.

Repair Café – Last event took place in January 2023. Laura Petit noted that it was relatively quiet. Background music had been provided. March 25 from 10-2 was the next scheduled event. A seamstress was needed. Resource Recovery Agency would be at the next event to speak to repurposing/resuse as well. Lee Gough had contact information for a seamstress if needed.

Goals 2023 - Mark Ellison provided screen share of document he had prepared and edited for review (list annexed hereto for reference). Discussion ensued relative to what Members would like to pursue. Lee Gough inquired what the challenges were presented for riparian plantings. Mark Ellison noted that maintenance and reporting would be necessary and permission from the Town regarding parks and Town properties would be needed. Approaching private landowners was considered an option. Mark provided a list of what had been ordered. Noel Russ suggested engaging local Scouts to assist as part of their scouting projects. This suggested plantings was separate from the Trees for Tribes initiative. There were a variety of packets to be handed out. Environmental Board could provide education in potential plantings and care. The Members confirmed that the document for 2023 goals was acceptable for them to work with. Laura Petit noted that signage on the recycling bins be updated to be unique to Esopus. Laura Petit suggested reaching out to the Supervisor for a social media page pertinent to the Environmental Board. Mark Ellison noted that the QR code is being promoted to direct individuals to

the Town website. Chris DeCicco had reviewed other municipality's websites and what hurdles were presented and the maintenance and updates as well. He was willing to share examples and was willing to be involved. Mark Ellison asked Chris DeCicco to share information for consideration. Mark Ellison noted that the administrator for the website had been accommodating. Evelyn Clarke suggested that a conversation take place with the Town Supervisor to determine what was feasible and Chris DeCicco indicated he would be willing to reach out.

Lee Gough's suggestion for goals was to encourage non-motorized transportation within the Town as well as encouraging use of public transportation. Ms. Gough also suggested the Environmental Board support Ulster County LL#12 for water rights (rights of the people for clean water and the rights of the River) which provides local control over local waters.

Chris DeCicco raised the issue of Tree of Heaven removal and the issue of the species harboring Stink Bugs and the Spotted Lantern Fly. Education for identification and removal of smaller plants could be beneficial and once grown, becomes more difficult to remove as time progresses. Resources in place would help collaborative effort to curb the invasiveness and the Environmental Board could be useful in that regard. Chris Baker supported an educational forum to educate the public. Lee Gough inquired as to what restrictions existed for Towns and municipalities to combat invasive species. Chris DeCicco noted that concerns regarding removal of vegetation could be mitigated by providing the information as to the detriments to the community and alternative vegetation that could be provided. Mark Ellison suggested gathering information to provide to the public for Earth Day and Laura Petit suggested posting on the Town EB webpage. Catskill Native Nursery would be contacted for information and Laura Petit suggested extending an invitation to attend Earth Day.

New Business:

Esopus Earth Day Celebration – Can finalize details at March 2023 meeting. Laura Petit looking for volunteers and vendors. Leg. Petit provided a list of participants she had been able to lock in. A speaker system would be needed for any presentations. Ellie Gartenstein would be available for child friendly presentation.

Mark Ellison recognized Lee Gough for local radio presentation and the Rights of Nature Law.

Ulster County NRI Draft – Mark Ellison had provided draft (excel spreadsheet) and asked that responses be provided to him to convey. He asked that Members review and note what other Towns have done. Ultimate goal was to provide an on-line document as a mapper and tool kit and he needed to respond Friday 2/17/2023. Bottom line was that it would assist the T/O Esopus when the Town develops its own inventory. Mark Ellison would re-distribute after the meeting for review.

Climate Smart Task Force –

Laura Petit screen shared. Resolutions were needed to present to the Town. Green Building Ordinance was needed and local food assistance policies were needed and she requested assistance. The Green Efficiency policy had been written. She could use assistance and highlighted policies that needed to be completed and asked for volunteers. PE9 Emergency Preparedness - Noel Russ and Mark Ellison could assist in compiling materials and were attending a meeting on 2/16/23 relative to same. Ellie Gartenstein would provide Kingston's Complete Streets policy for reference but much of the information may be localized.

Ellie Gartenstein was willing to investigate composting opportunities within the municipality and the policy (kitchen top composting). Mark Ellison would discuss brush/leaf collection with Lenny at the Transfer Station.

Lee Gough offered to provide waste reduction signage. Chris DeCicco would be contributing to social media. Ellie Gartenstein inquired if the Town Website could promote Environmental Board events.

Laura Petit stated that the next NYSERDA information portal input deadline was May of 2023 for data input.

Green building standards – would reach out to CEO Mark Jaffee.

Ellie Gartenstein was working on the Tree Policy and other municipalities had policies that were available for review – Laura Petit would provide.

Adjourned 8:56 p.m.

Next meeting March 15, 2023

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa K. Mance
Prepared February 15, 2023
Approved: March 15, 2023