

Esopus Environmental Board Minutes
February 21, 2024

Present:

Mark Ellison, EB Chairperson
Laura Petit, Climate Smart Chairperson
Chris DeCicco
Nina Nichols
Noel Russ

Public Attendees:

M. Karabec	Brian Jacobs
Steve Cerini	Joseph Doreo
Patricia Ferri	Richard Ferri
Duane North	Thom Hermance
Charlie Peechl	Mitchell Donner

Excused:

Cynthia McVay
Ellie Gartenstein

Meeting commenced at approximately 7:05 p.m.
Pledge of Allegiance – Emergency exits

Old Business:

Membership: Chairman Ellison noted that the Board was comprised of nine (9) Members and that there was currently one (1) vacancy. Jenna Rice was introduced as a potential candidate who provided a resume and addressed the Board with her experience and interests. She was currently working on a bachelor's degree participating in geology and environmental science courses with aspirations to become a conservation officer. Chairperson Ellison noted that members participate in numerous webinars and encouraged participation.

Minutes: January 17, 2024 Minutes (as amended). Upon Motion of Laura Petit, seconded by Noel Russ, and all in favor, the Minutes were approved.

UC EMC – The Minutes from the November 2023 meeting had been provided by email.

Tree Clearing Policy – Tabled for discussion for the March meeting. Member Russ noted that enforcement was a common issue and the model adopted in New Paltz was a good model. Member Petit had shared the draft policy with Steve Cerini of the Tree Task Force. Mr. Cerini stated that the Task Force was created to provide input to the Town board with ideas and recommendations.

Castlemore Holdings Mima, LLC – No update to provide. The ZBA had met on February 20, 2024. The item would appear on future Environmental Board Agendas only if there were future updates.

Grant Status – Ellie Gartenstein had been working on two (2) grants. Laura Petit stated she had received an email from Eleanor Peck who informed there were additional grant funding opportunities available. There was money in the escrow accounts that could be utilized. Nina Nichols had researched Hudson River Estuary grants and there were many that could be applicable. The deadline to apply was at the end of March 2024. Guest Jenna Ice stated her office was next to the Hudson River Estuary Grant office and she offered to inquire.

Laura Petit stated that the Town was on the grant portal and the Town Supervisor was the administrator. A follow-up with the Town Supervisor would be made by Nina Nichols to Supervisor Freer and Evelyn Clarke to inquire what funding was available and if a grant writer could be engaged). There was currently \$11,976.46 in the escrow account and \$3,200.00 in the budget. (Over 300 saplings had been ordered and taken from the budget).

Esopus Environmental Board Minutes
February 21, 2024

New Business:

Environmental Board Responsibilities – Chairman Ellison would be reviewing. The Ulster County Environmental Management Council was utilizing Zoom and the Chairman would like to promote participating via Zoom with a hybrid option for the Town Environmental Board.

Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Draft Plan – The link to the plan was:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/exper/4f52ec5c29fa4ffd8301665817e15f22/page/Draft-Plan/>

Developing a plan allowed for the Town of Esopus to be eligible for FEMA assistance in the event of an emergency. Over the past year, the Town had participated in a training event and Esopus had provided a 30-page plan.

Statewide Financial Assistance – Nina Nicholas had sent out an email and the Supervisor had been contacted regarding same.

Municipal Tree Planting Program – Project offered through the Ulster County DEC to provide trees to Towns for planting. The program requires a site plan for planting to be provided and the Town was responsible for the planting. Chairman Ellison had reached out to Steve Cerini to see if any volunteers were available for the planting. The application deadline was April 1, 2024.

CLIMATE SMART:

Repair Café – May 23, 2024 at the Ascension Church.

Municipal Tree Planting – Green parking lot plantings qualified as a climate smart action step. A member of the Tree Task Force had provided the Melbourne Tree initiative which included trees planted with its own email address and helped promote community involvement. Chairman Ellison noted that it may be presented at the upcoming Last Frost Festival.

The Environmental Board had been previously tasked to investigate stormwater management and had engaged the public to provide comments. Chairman Ellison stated that the Comprehensive Plan should be visited to determine if stormwater management would involve the Environmental Board and the resurrection of the Stormwater Task Force. Chairman Ellison would research and place on the next Agenda. Noel Russ volunteered to pursue the flooding at New Salem Road and the CSX culverts and would reach out to the Highway Superintendent.

Last Frost Fest – Planned to be held May 18, 2024 and would prefer to host at location in the center of Town. Nina Nichols had contact for a native foraging exhibitor and Chairman Ellison had contacted two (2) beekeepers to present at both the Last Frost Fest and the Honeybee Jubilee. Laura Petit encouraged attendance by vendors and participants and fliers would be distributed.

Legislator Manna Jo Green had contacted Chairman Ellison to request volunteers for an upcoming Solar Mapping Tool Training

EV Charging Stations – The location at the Town Hall for an EV Charging station in the vicinity of the Ulster County Sheriff's substation had been put on hold and the Environmental Board had been requested to look into alternate locations. Laura Petit had submitted grant applications which resulted

Esopus Environmental Board Minutes
February 21, 2024

in the award of two (2) 17K grant awards. CEO Jaffee had recommended the installation by the solar mechanical building in the lower Town parking lot. Chairman Ellison inquired if there were any Town incentives that could encourage Town businesses to participate. Member DeCicco offered to help with the installation of the EV Station.

Honeybee Jubilee – Scheduled for Sunday, September 15

to be held at Ross Park. Vendors had already been scheduled to attend. Member Petit asked what additional attractions could be added educationally.

Climate Smart Task Force –

Repair Café – March 23, 2024 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. was the next scheduled event at the Ascension Church.

Climate Smart NYSERDA Portal –

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,

Lisa K. Mance, Secretary

Dated: March 14, 2024

Approved: March 20, 2024