



Minutes of the 10-30-23 Meeting

This meeting was conducted on Zoom.

FMCE Business:

***Welcome and Introductions**

Members and a guest, Madison Quinn, Monroe County Sustainability Coordinator, introduced themselves. Victoria Zelin and Jonathan Cloud want to be members and have lived in Rochester for 3 years. They represent Possible Rochester <http://possiblerochester.org> which is part of Possible Planet, an organization that they founded. They organized the planet into bioregions and want to set up a Genesee-Finger Lakes Bioregional Center. They promote having social groups working together with science and research and need people not to have personality conflicts. They are working on our bioregional future, restoring landscapes, communities and the human spirit.

Their program for businesses, C-PACE, <http://possiblerochester.com>, uses clean energy financing to regenerate communities -upgrading buildings, revitalizing neighborhoods and strengthening bonds. C-PACE provides low-cost, long-term, fixed rate capital for energy efficiency and on-site energy generation for retrofits and new construction. Businesses can upgrade, save money, and reduce their carbon footprint without laying out any money. The county can help by offering incentives and it is good for everyone.

***Acceptance of the 9-25-23 Minutes**

Minutes of the September 25 meeting were approved.

***Future Meeting Facilitators**

Loretta Morrell will facilitate the November 26 meeting and Cassy will facilitate on January 22. Sally Howard will be backup facilitator for both dates.

***Greentopia EcoFest Table**

Cassy and Jack worked at the FMCE table for the first half of the event and talked to a few people including a teacher, a young man interested in disc golf in the parks, and Victoria and Jon from Possible Rochester. They did not find the handouts Sally made which were in the bag. Sally and Liz worked the second half and made some high-quality connections. One man said that he had formed a street tree team to take care of the trees in their neighborhood. Some people would like trees planted, but don't want to be responsible for them or were unable to clean up after them. The tree team would rake for those who couldn't do it. Cassy suggested inviting him to our meeting.

Greentopia lined up a lot of vendors, but did not get enough advertising. They were on Evan Dawson's show, but the TV stations didn't advertise it. Next year it will be at High Falls and will be earlier in the year when it is warmer.

Issue Updates:

*Energy/Climate Change/Land Use

- STAMP – The Science, Technology and Advanced Manufacturing Park has a new tenant coming in, Edwards Vacuum, a British based world leader in dry pump technology for the semiconductor industry. They will build 36,000 square feet of facilities with 300 parking spots on 47 acres of the 1,250-acre industrial park. It was just approved by Genesee County, but all the documents haven't been published yet.

Janet was unable to participate in our meeting, but sent this report: The best ongoing record of events at STAMP is available on the Allies of the Tonowanda Nation website <https://alliesoftsn.weebly.com/>. Click on "Menu" in the upper left corner and then click on "News and Media" for newspaper reports.

Recent events not yet on their website include:

Sen. Schumer backed designation of Buffalo/Rochester/Syracuse as a federal tech hub.

A recent Tom Zambito article about the New York State high tech development project STAMP https://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2023/10/23/upstate-ny-tech-hub-federal-money-possible-to-join-micron-investment-rochester-buffalo-syracuse/71286516007/?utm_source=democratandchronicle-dailybriefing-strada&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dailybriefing-headline-stack&utm_term=hero&utm_content=pind-rochester-nletter65

The Town of Shelby is joining Orleans County in State Supreme Court in an effort to block the pipeline that would empty wastewater into Oak Orchard Creek. The present STAMP buildout estimate would be 50,000 gallons per day. At full buildout, 6 million gallons per day. The Court date has been moved from October to an unspecified date, probably in November.

"[Shelby files court motion to be included in Orleans suit to halt STAMP pipeline | Orleans Hub](https://buffalonews.com/opinion/editorial/the-editorial-board-the-stamp-pipeline-is-causing-real-problems-and-deserves-scrutiny/article_5906cae4-6834-11ee-8daf-5b95d7db4a91.html)
https://buffalonews.com/opinion/editorial/the-editorial-board-the-stamp-pipeline-is-causing-real-problems-and-deserves-scrutiny/article_5906cae4-6834-11ee-8daf-5b95d7db4a91.html

Dick Sutton reported that Trout Unlimited is raising salmon in Oak Orchard Creek so they want to know what pollution there will be in the creek. Kate and Janet will send information about the pipeline situation to Dick.

- Other Energy Issues

Li-Cycle <https://li-cycle.com/rochester-hub/> recycles lithium-ion batteries and was supposed to be expanding their Rochester plant, but have stopped because of costs going up. They were awarded a loan from the federal government, a grant, from NYS and tax breaks from Monroe County, but had not actually received any money from any of them yet, fortunately. <https://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/money/business/2023/10/25/li-cycle-pauses-on-rochester-expansion-jobs/71305798007/>

There was a **recent decision by the Public Service Commission** to deny a raise in subsidies for already approved renewable energy projects. Developers said they needed more help because of the inflation and cost overruns. The competitive bidding process is supposed to keep costs down so giving them more money after approval would destroy the bidding process. Their decision was not based on NYS budget deficits. It remains to be seen if the projects will now be canceled. NY has approved 86 land-based projects and 3 offshore projects. So far, none have been canceled.

A recent study found that increasing demand for **AI** could use as much energy as a small nation. Training AI is one of the most energy consuming processes of using this technology.

China has banned **cybercurrency mining** in China because it uses so much electricity, so they are building bitcoin mining facilities in the U.S., especially in Texas, which wants to be the capital of cybercurrency mining.

- NYS Legislation – The governor still has not signed the Birds and Bees Protection Act so please continue to urge her to sign it.

- Color Your Community Green Groups

Color Pittsford Green has started a Pittsford Pollinator Pathway Challenge in which you must plant at least 10 native plants, trees, and shrubs from their list, avoid all pesticide use, and provide water and shelter for pollinators. Submit a form listing what you planted to receive a Pittsford Pollinator Pathway yard sign. www.townofpittsford.org/pollinator-pathway

Color Greece Green is going to work together with two other westside towns to form *Color Greece, Parma and Hamlin Green*.

Color Henrietta Green had a successful Buckthorn pull at Tinker Park on Oct. 7 with RIT students helping with the work. On Oct. 3 they had an excellent panel discussion on Parkinsons, Pesticides and Policy. Parkinsons and lung disease were rare 100 years ago, but have become increasingly common and are environmental diseases caused by exposure to chemicals such as pesticides and TCE. TCE is commonly used for degreasing in machine shops, and manufacturing and farm workers are still being exposed to pesticides.

***Recycling**

- Composting – Pat Wartinger attended a conference in Buffalo on composting of organics. Buffalo has had a large composting facility for a long time and it was the first one in western NY. It gets food waste from restaurants and stores and zoo poo from herbivores. Composting is alive and well in Henrietta. Pat could not share the news yet, but Impact Earth has a possible partner for finance and a business consultant.

The city has added a third drop off location for food scraps, but more than three is not financially feasible. There needs to be a county program. It works for food scraps from RIT, U of R, and Wegmans to be trucked to Linwood for composting, but not for residential collection. Trucking residential food waste there would negate any of the benefits from composting.

Rats are a problem and the Health Dept. could shut composting down if there are rats. Kate composted for 17 years without a problem until her neighbors started raising chickens and feeding them corn. Then the rats came to their yard and Kate's. Now she can't compost or they will come back.

Madison Quinn (madisonquinn@monroecounty.gov) explained that the one-year organics composting pilot project chosen by the county involves anaerobic digestion, but it is not permanent. <https://www.monroecounty.gov/files/DES/FINAL%20FORMAT%20FOOD%20SCRAPS%20CPAC%20With%20Pittsford%20Changes.pdf> There can be other pilots. Monroe County Solid Waste Dept. is working on an organics management plan and spoke to many towns. Pittsford is the first to try it. She gave us a link to see how the pilot program decision was made. <https://www.monroecounty.gov/des-climate-committee#minutes>

South Korea has announced that their whole country will have zero food waste in landfills. They will use an aerobic process and use the compost produced to enrich their soil. The program for Pittsford residents is drop off, not curbside collection. Pat asked why they need a feasibility study. Some Pittsford residents were using Impact Earth's service, but switched to the pilot program so they don't have to pay anything. Cassy said that government needs information from a study so they can vote on it. They can't jump in without a trial.

Madison said that she is not the decision maker. The study has just started. There could be another pilot project, but probably not until this one is over. Contact your officials about the

project. Some FMCE members have advocated for composting at MC Legislature meetings and Climate Action Plan meetings. Kate Walker said that the county made a bad decision.

Seattle has organics composting and curbside collection. You can't put food in your trash or you will be fined. <https://www.biocycle.net/seattles-winning-strategy-managing-organics/>
<https://atyourservice.seattle.gov/2023/05/16/seattle-leader-in-municipal-composting-how-to-get-it-right/>

- Solar – Solar panel recycling continues to be a challenge. One company in Florida, OnePlanet, www.1planetrecycling.com, has 65 years of recycling experience and is now recycling solar panels and not sending any part of the panels to the landfill.

***PARKS**

- Monroe County Parks Advisory Committee – Cassy, Carol and Dick Spade attended the October 19 meeting. Bob Kiley, Deputy Parks Director, talked about the referrals which included \$30,00 to start a master plan for the new county park in Henrietta and a \$250,000 state grant for a First Responders memorial at Highland Park. Cassy suggested that the Parks Dept. send referrals to the people who get the agenda ahead of time so they are familiar with them before the vote. Dick Spade suggested that they add new members to the PAC, maybe some women who were at the meeting. Cassy doesn't want to be a member. After the meeting, the deputy parks director, Bob Kiley, talked to Cassy about how to find the referrals online. He said it is difficult for them to get the referrals ahead of the meeting because they are sent to the county executive and often come back changed, but they will try. One man had complained about hunting in the parks near where he lives.

***Water/Great Lakes**

- GLN – Great Lakes Network thinks there is a need for a coordinated effort to be proactive on climate change, invasive species, farming, water usage, etc. So many agencies need to be coordinated. Animal agriculture is a big challenge to watersheds and is not strictly regulated. Canada has more intensive agriculture and population near the Great Lakes, which is their Florida. Ohio is a big offender. The U. S. farm bill could make a difference and is still open for comments. It comes up every 5 years. The farm bill controls our diets, wetlands, water quality, farm workers, and what is subsidized. It encourages big farms rather than small ones. Contact your representatives in Congress about a good farm bill.

Oppose the bad EATS Act. The good EATS Act has funding for the SNAP program (food stamps). The bad EATS Act says that farms can't be told what to do. California may say farm workers can't be mistreated, but the bad bill says that states can't regulate farms.

Monroe County's combined storm water and sewage system has underground storage of excess storm water. It usually has one event a year that causes untreated sewage to overflow, but this year had 6 of those events. Here is an article about the combined sewer infrastructure and climate resiliency. <https://www.rochesterfirst.com/environment/building-resiliency-to-climate-change-in-our-sewers/>

- GLEN – The Great Lakes Ecosystem Network encourages watching a FLOW (For the Love of Water) webinar about the Enbridge Line 5 on Wednesday, Nov. 1, at noon. A leak in that pipeline under the Mackinac Straits would be devastating, but Enbridge wants to expand Line 5. A speaker from FLOW came to the Sierra Club Environmental Forum to speak about the public trust a few years ago.

Working With the County

***MC Climate Action Plan Advisory Committee** <https://www.monroecounty.gov/des-climate-committee>

- Madison Quinn reported that Phase 2 is still underway. The survey will wrap up soon and they will develop a draft plan. Stakeholder conversations will continue into 2024. There have been 600 responses so far to the survey, but they need more from the west side of Rochester. A

raffle for a grocery gift card for survey participants will be held in early November. We can still give input even when they do the draft plan.

- FMCE Action Needed- MC CAP Plan [Home Page](#), Review [3/15 Materials](#)
<https://www.monroecountyclimateaction.com/get-involved>

***MC Environmental Management Council** <https://www.monroecounty.gov/eh-emc>

Sally attended the October EMC meeting. There were interesting reports from the local conservation committees working on protecting the environment in their towns. Chris Fredette was honored for her decades of environmental work and they had a report on all the achievements of the MC Parks Dept. in the last four years. With money available they were able to repair and renovate many park buildings, roads, and parking lots and put in some new facilities. They also talked about restaurant inspections.

***MC Comprehensive Planning Process – Plan Forward** <https://www.monroecounty.gov/planforward>

They are behind schedule because the old plans need a lot of work to update them. The draft plan is not ready yet, but will be coming soon. They will do a farmland protection update and open space protection. Madison County has thin film solar on their landfill.

Member Announcements and Comments:

- Kate attended an excellent talk at the Memorial Art Gallery on October 18 by Robin Wall Kimmerer, author of Braiding Sweetgrass, interviewed by Dr. Kelsey Leonard. She talked about environmental stewardship and water issues in Canada. It was inspiring and challenging. She will be speaking at Cornell. The talk was recorded and can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0KvqNvX0>
- Pope Francis has written a short letter, Laudate Deum, as a sequel to his encyclical, Laudato si, on climate change. He emphasizes that we have a crisis and we have no time to lose. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html
- Madison Quinn is great. Kate Walker is brilliant and science based, authoritative.
- Victoria Zelin needs to find students for their projects and also wants to talk with each of us. Her address is vzelin@possiblerochester.org. Jonathan's is jcloud@possiblerochester.org

Attendance:

Jonathan Cloud, Carol Hinkelman, Sally Howard, Kate Kremer, Loretta Morrell, Daryl Odhner, Cassy Petsos, Sally Parmigiani, Liz Pixley, Sue Pixley, Jack Schroeder, Dick Sutton, Pat Wartinger, and Victoria Zelin

Guest: Madison Quinn

Next Meetings: Mondays - November 27, January 22