

Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (I O) Meeting Minutes 9/27/17

Attendance: Tee Ann Hunter, Michael Boggs, Darby Kiley, Hilary Lambert, Lynn Leopold, Cynthia Brock, Dave Sprout, Ric Deitrich, CJ Randall, Jackie Cassaniti

A number of ideas were shared at this meeting, see underlined words for highlights:

Financial Report: There are 24 I O members who paid dues as of September, 2017; this revenue amounted to \$18,350. After giving the Floating Classroom \$7,000 this past spring, the ending balance for the I O is \$38,978. The I O is looking forward to the spring of 2018 to help communities around the lake fund their water projects and/or help them get funding. The thing the I O wants is for municipalities (munis) to come to our meetings with their ideas. The I O wants to keep Cayuga Lake as clean as possible and that takes commitment of the surrounding munis to keep watch of the streams that go to the lake.

A new group that has been formed through the DEC is the Finger Lakes Water Hub (FLWH), the scientist who will monitor and assess the lakes, reservoirs and streams in our area is Tony Prestigiacomio, find out more info at http://www.cayugalake.org/files/all/fl_hub_clwn_5-6-17_presentation.pdf

Tee Ann and CJ went to a TCCOG meeting and asked them to set up a subcommittee for the lakes. This would be the right year since elections will be held in November and the candidates would be more receptive to the voters' ideas about cleaning up the streams that go to the lakes. A \$5,000 grant from them would help highway superintendents to set up a watershed summit. Elizabeth Thomas, the supervisor of Ulysses, would like to help by asking these organizations to come together: (ex) Tompkins County Water Resources Council, the I O, CLWN, CSI, the Health Departments, Cornell researchers, The Hydrilla Task Force, Finger Lakes Land Trust, munis, including Seneca and Cayuga Counties (maybe invite Tioga County for Upper Susquehanna Coalition ideas), someone from NYS, possibly Stephanie Wojtowicz from the DOS, and Tony Prestigiacomio from FLWH, and other groups concerned about the lake. They could use the updated RPP to get projects going (see below), a big threat now is the harmful algae blooms (HABS); the meeting could be facilitated by Kathy Bertuch of the Central NY Regional Planning and Development Board. Would there be a place outside Ithaca that would lend the I O its space? The Engaged Cornell Local Partnership Forum was Wednesday, 9/27/17, sponsored by Cornell and community entities, could the I O get help from them; what about CLWN? To see this site go to oei.engaged.cornell.edu applications for the fall are due 10/16/17, but maybe the spring round (due 2/9/18) would work better for the I O, (CJ said Cornell faculty of staff may need to be involved with the application). The I O could meet after this meeting to talk about what is possible.

It might also be possible to use the local highway school to educate the highway superintendents about taking better care of what goes into the streams that go to the lake; Seneca County will hold a ditching program this fall for highway superintendents, sponsored by Cornell Local Roads. (There was a mention of "EMS," but I didn't get that part.) There will also be a Sustainable Communities Conference at Cornell Thursday, September 28, 2017, which

Darby will attend. Lynn mentioned that the projects that were accepted were “shovel ready.” That is an important component, maybe they are necessary projects, but the money isn’t there, this would be a good fit. This needs to be done as soon as possible because rainfall has increased by 50% during the time Ric has been the Danby Supervisor, as an example, Cynthia, said, the city reservoir needs to be dredged. Tee Ann said we need a process to get the ideas from the munis, but these projects cost a lot of money; a typical WQIP project can cost from \$50,000 up to \$500,000! Hilary mentioned smaller groups like the Cayuga Canoga Shoreliners that are monitoring 4 creeks in the northern part of Cayuga Lake might need some funds. Tee Ann suggested getting an inventory of the ditches that go into Cayuga Lake, but that would be a big job, and there is an inventory of the culverts in Tompkins County done by Angel Hinickle of TCSW. This working group could invite Budd Shaddick, the mayor of Union Springs, because he received 4 grants to work on water projects in his village, how did he do it? A meeting with many stakeholders would need to plan on what to do first, some things have been known for a long time while others need to be studied.

For the new 3 year grant from DOS (to work on the recommendations in the updated RPP), the I O needs to have a \$12,000 match for each year, so Tee Ann wants to watch where the I O money goes. Tee Ann said there will be a meeting October 3rd at 1:30 to go over the contract with the DOS. Munis could then be contacted to let them know the opportunities for them in the DOS grant. Ric suggested getting the highway departments together as he did with Newfield to get a grant for creeks in both towns; he said there was a big meeting of highway superintendents in Buffalo; highway superintendents and their deputies have ideas, but don’t know what to do with them; a combination of munis might work, but everyone wants to do it their way! Darby mentioned another concern, the TMDL plan from the DEC that will come out soon, so munis need to be ready, what are the DEC best management practices?

Hydrilla update: Hilary said there is a new outbreak of hydrilla at Stewart Park. She and the Hydrilla Task Force think that with all the high water earlier this year, the hydrilla floated down from Fall Creek to take hold in the lake. There has also been more hydrilla found outside the treatment area near Aurora. Bob Johnson from Cornell U and Wells College and Hilary Mosher from the Finger Lakes Institute urge people to check all harbors and boat launch stations for hydrilla. Other ideas on how hydrilla got into Cayuga Lake are from boats carrying it in, geese spreading it from other areas, and people throwing the plants from fish tanks into the lake. Schools and other places need to be educated not to put these plants into the lake because they might be hydrilla, which can be purchased online as it looks great in aquariums.

After all that, there was a good announcement by Lynn: the Floating Classroom has purchased a new boat! It is now in Jersey City, NJ, and will be sailed to Ithaca through the Erie Canal soon. It is an open cruise boat that is 60’ long, and it was purchased with a loan from a “helping angel”, as Lynn put it. They will have a blog of the trip on floatingclassroom.net

Submitted by Jackie Cassaniti