

Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (I O) Meeting Minutes 5/23/18

Attendance: Bud Shattuck, V. Union Springs; Ric Deitrick, T. Danby; Becky Sims, T. Enfield; Cynthia Brock, City of Ithaca; Deborah Dawson, V. Lansing; Tee Ann Hunter, T. Ithaca, Chair of the I O; Darby Kiley, Tompkins County Planner; Hilary Lambert, Cayuga Lake Watershed Network; Joe Wetmore, T. Lansing; Tom Vawter, T. Lansing; Michael Boggs, T. Ulysses; Katrine Binkewicz, T. Lansing; Mike Solvig, T. Ithaca, financial officer; Paulette Rosa, T. Ithaca, town clerk; Jackie Cassaniti, T. Caroline

The minutes were passed from 4/25/18, and the I O financial statement is \$31, 497.87 (\$2.07 interest). Mike Solvig said the \$5,000 from Cornell will be coming soon with the completion of the paperwork.

Bud attended the meeting in the place of Keith Batman who was going to report on the Cayuga County laws dealing with Owasco Lake as well as the septic system laws in the county. There are 3 main things going on in Cayuga County; the laws for public water safety in Auburn, NY; a 14-point manure management plan and a 3 year septic system pump-out plan (this septic system plan can be found at the Cayuga County Health Dep't website). The discussion went to the need for such a law in Tompkins County, specifically, for Lansing which Cynthia said has up to a 40% failure rate for septic systems there. It was determined that the area didn't want a sewer system in the past because it would entice more people to move to the area, and those there didn't want to pay for it. The area is located on bedrock that goes downhill, so sewage could go right down to the lake unless pumped at regular intervals. (The southern part of the Village of Lansing is connected to the northern part of the Cayuga Heights sewer system.) Bud suggested that the I O have a meeting in Cayuga County with speakers who could address these subjects.

Joe Wetmore talked about the Lake George area testing all the septic systems around the lake to combat algae blooms. It was shown that failing septic systems near the lake contributed to the algae blooms right in that area. He asked why all the septic systems around Tompkins County couldn't be pumped, but it would be too big a job. Tee Ann added that all the septic systems in Tompkins County should be (dye) tested, but as Deborah said, would the I O be able to draft a resolution to give to the health department that would be seriously considered? Becky, who works at the Tompkins County Health Dep't, said the county doesn't require septic system testing when a house is sold, but the lender does. Tom said there are 6 counties around the lake...why pick Tompkins County? What about Seneca County? Hilary said that the I O should get information together before they present this to the Tompkins County Legislature. Bud added that Union Springs is completely sewered, so they don't have septic issues. Ric will ask CJ Randal if there is already money to replace failing septic systems, as Tee Ann said NYS might already have. The testing should be done by the county, not individual towns; any of this probably couldn't be done in 2019 because of budget constraints.

Tee Ann said the I O would not apply for any large grants this year, but would be willing to write letters of support for any municipality in the watershed that has a water quality improvement

project needing funds. Ric mentioned the mapping project that Mike Thorne is doing for the streams in the Ithaca area.

Tee Ann also wants the I O to consider hiring an administrative helper to list water quality initiative projects around the watershed. The Town of Ithaca would like to do this, plus more outreach, but needs to stay in Tompkins County. This would give municipalities the opportunity to see what others in the watershed were doing by putting this info online. Tee Ann has one or two people in mind, and Tom said he could help write up a job description with the scope of work.

Tee Ann said she wrote a grant to the Park Foundation for \$4,500 to take watershed municipal officials (up to 70) on a boat ride using the Teal, the new boat for “Discover Cayuga Lake”, formerly the Floating Classroom. This would be in August sometime, probably near the end of the month. And Bill Foster has some coupons for the summer; BOGO for the Cayuga Lake cruises.

NYS is putting together a steering committee for the HABs in NY lakes. All the Finger Lakes have been affected by this algae problem and the I O and CLWN were asked to be part of it. She said the HAB's regulations should have more teeth, need more DEC inspections. This report should be out soon.

Cynthia talked about the environmental concerns of the intent to develop the Emerson-Morse Chain industrial area of South Hill. She doesn't think the proposed fixes for the area are enough, and the proposed multiuse development will not be a healthy place; the Emerson property is a NYS superfund site. She feels the area is still polluted, and it will take more effort to clean up the land. One of the spots she pointed out is called the “rice field area” which was a platform storage site for drums of chemicals; check the info at the 4/3/18 Toxic Targeting report. (Bud mentioned the pollution in Auburn from the GE site, which has a plume that reaches Union Springs.)

Submitted by Jackie Cassaniti