

Coalition of Watershed Towns Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2012

Present: Bill Layton, Carl Stuendel (Delaware County); Dennis Lucas and Stephen Walker (Greene County); Bruce LaMonda (Ulster County); Tony VanGlad (Schoharie County), Bryan Delaney (Sullivan County). Jeff Baker – Counsel.

6:03 PM start

1. **February meeting minutes** – motion to accept February minutes made by Carl Stuendel, seconded by Steve Walker with all present in favor

2. **Flood Mitigation subcommittee meetings March 8, 2012**

Continuation of short term flood buyout and long term flood hazard mitigation discussion with watershed stakeholders (DEP, EPA, DOH, DEC, CWT, County contract agencies)

- *Buyout program*
 - DEP will contribute toward the 25% local share for the acquisition/buyout program for site costs that fall within their LAP program (appraisal, surveys, environmental assessment, title search, legal costs)
 - DEP will own the parcels and pay taxes at vacant land rates
 - For small hamlet parcels the town will be responsible for maintenance
 - For larger parcels on the outskirts DEP will consider maintaining (parcels to be decided)
 - DEP is willing to explore their ability to upfront money to process purchases sooner than FEMA's timeline
 - DEP willing to consider buying floodprone parcels not eligible by FEMA standards
 - DEP is not opposed to swapping DEP upland parcels for floodplain parcels, would be on case by case basis
- *Long-term flood hazard mitigation*
 - State agencies (DOH, DEC) and EPA are receptive to looking at different approaches to water quality protection that encompass flood hazard mitigation (FHM) providing county agencies can present a coherent argument of what is needed and why
 - Jeff B. emailed county agencies requesting copies of SWCDs contracts, projects funded by the contracts, projects not funded but recommended by SWCD in order to get a full picture of contracting process, where gaps lie and present a plan identifying specific needs and capacity building supports
 - DEP is committed to level funding for SWCDs but does not feel new funds are needed; they feel districts should re-prioritize how existing funds are used
 - Important to ensure SWCDs can contract with municipalities or planning departments to bring in additional resources to tackle FHM tasks. Though the City did not support increasing staff capacity at the 3/8/12 meeting, Jeff B. feels that can be overcome
 - If there are any needs in Sullivan and Schoharie Cos. they should bring them forth to the Coalition. The main counties with most at stake are Delaware, Ulster and Greene
 - Bruce L. questioned areas outside the City Watershed in terms of upstream/downstream effects. Funds from these negotiations will go toward

supporting projects in watershed communities only but that should free up county staff to work in other non-watershed areas

- Staff capacity, work load, subcontracting, administrative needs, etc. have to be planned for in order to meet the growing challenges of a proactive FHM program
- Dennis Doyle, Ulster Co. Planning Dept. Director, emphasized getting county and municipal highway departments input in planning long term infrastructure and water quality protection projects
- Recognizing stream restoration projects in Greene County that weathered Irene well, Dennis L. noted SWCDs should include all steps, practices that go above and beyond restoration projects
- Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) – DEP is willing to cover the 25% cost share for EWP projects they feel are compatible with their water quality objectives, which leaves a gap for other projects counties and municipalities feel are important
- The county technical agencies will meet again in early April before the next stakeholders meeting on April 19, 2012

3. **Bill** – Young and Sommer bill for January 2012 was approved on motion by Carl Stuendel, seconded by Bruce LaMonda with all present in favor.

4. **Correspondence**

- Ulster County letter objecting to DEP acting as Lead Agency for the EIS for its 2011 Long Term Watershed Protection Plan (LTWPP)
 - Dennis Doyle reiterated concerns Ulster County has with respect to DEP acting as Lead Agency of its watershed protection program, in that the same agency is responsible for deciding the significance of environmental impacts of its own programs. The county feels there's not a lot of transparency in the city process and that DOH or DEC should conduct the independent review.
 - Jeff B. noted given the focus of working with state agencies on redirecting resources as part of the mid-term FAD review as discussed above, it's not a concern that the city serve as Lead Agency on the LTWPP review, a report that's fairly generic to begin with.

7:28 PM Meeting adjourned on motion by Dennis Lucas, seconded by Bruce LaMonda with all present in favor.