

**ONEONTA, NEW YORK - APRIL 11, 2012 - 7:00 P.M.**

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD PG. 1**

**PRESENT:** Chair David Hutchison  
Commissioner Tracy Allen  
Commissioner Dan Rorick  
Commissioner Dale Burrington  
Commissioner George Palladino  
Commissioner Lucille Wiggin  
Council Member Larry Malone  
**ABSENT:** Commissioner Richard Denicore

Chair Hutchison called the regular meeting to order and called the roll.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Without benefit of a motion, the board approved the minutes of the regular meeting held March 14, 2012 with the following corrections made by Commissioner Palladino:

-Page 2, paragraph 6 – 1<sup>st</sup> line – remove “Rehab Building Specialist House”  
3<sup>rd</sup> line – add the words “the original” before the word “conversation”  
5<sup>th</sup> line – add the word “now” before the word “there”  
8<sup>th</sup> line – add the words “lot renovation” before the word “plan”

**PETITIONERS (limited to comment)**

Ms. Clarissa Stewart stated she was interested in improving the environment. She said before she started petitioning she wanted to listen and learn more.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Chair Hutchison gave a brief summary on the correspondence received, the NYSERDA energy audit program being offered and upcoming environmental events.

The board held a brief discussion on some of the items.

Commissioner Palladino stated regarding the issue of the energy audit he said at the board’s March meeting he had said he would contact the Oneonta City School District. He said he had done so about an energy audit under the program being offered but had not heard back yet.

Chair Hutchison stated the energy audits were available for small businesses and churches would be considered small businesses. He said there were a lot of churches in Oneonta and he did not know if any had applied for an audit. He said he would be attending a meeting on May 5<sup>th</sup> in Cooperstown with a group from Sustainable Otsego to hear speakers on the energy audit and he would briefly explain then what the city was doing environmentally.

Commissioner Palladino stated maybe the board ought to consider sponsoring an information program in Oneonta.

**REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES**

Creek Program [Allen-spring –odd years only]  
Tree Program [Hutchison]  
Watershed Protection District [Hutchison]  
Sustainability Working Group [Allen]

**Creek Program [Allen-spring –odd years only]**

Chair Hutchison stated Commissioner Allen’s students were analyzing streams in the Oneonta area that drain into the Susquehanna River. He said that has been a project of theirs for several years.

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**(Reports of Officers, etc)** continued

Commissioner Allen stated there was no report on the monitoring of streams at this time. He said also under a small grant he had the students go out and monitor basic baseline water quality throughout the county at 50 different sites.

**Tree Program [Hutchison]**

Chair Hutchison stated the tree program was moving along very well. He reported that Commissioner Denicore and he had selected about 40 sites from responses from property owners in the community to plant trees on private property. Local Landscaper Brian Fawcett of Asbury Gardens would be fully engaged in the city's tree planting program. The program was to the point where he was distributing the planting agreement form to those persons saying who wanted a tree for them to sign giving the city permission to go onto private property to plant a tree and that the city was no longer responsible for the tree and that responsibility would be transferred to the property owner. He said Asbury Gardens was in the process of changing ownership but if the new owner Mike could do the trees he was anticipating planting the 40 trees this spring and that would secure the use the money available for trees.

Commissioner Palladino stated in regard to tree planting in the Dietz Street parking lot he said when it was originally looked at with Engineering and Brian Fawcett they thought they could get 8-12 trees in. He said Brian and he then went back and looked harder at it and they thought they could get at least 20 trees in there without losing any parking places. He said they came up with a plan to plant 20 trees in the lot and presented it to Engineering. He said the point of contention was if they tried to get them all in now it would be costly because the new trees needed the right fill and had to be protected. He said it cost about \$800 to prepare each site. He said Engineering did not want to put the trees in all at once and wanted to do it as they renovate the lot. He said one-third of the lot was being renovated in 2012 provided no emergencies occur. He said 8 trees may be planted this year and that was more manageable.

The board held a brief discussion on the planting of trees on private properties and in the Dietz Street parking lot.

**Watershed Protection District [Hutchison]**

Chair Hutchison stated that the watershed protection overlay district project by the Town of Oneonta's Code Enforcement Office Neske, in which the city was involved, was moving along but there was nothing new to report. He said one could get information about it online at the Town of Oneonta website and click on watershed protection overlay district.

**Sustainability Working Group [Allen]**

Commissioner Allen stated he contact Donna Vogler but she was no longer on that committee and she directed him to Mark Davies. He said he sent him an e-mail.

Chair Hutchison stated Mark Davies sent him an e-mail suggesting that the Sustainability Working Group should either be a task force or a commission rolled into the Environmental Board. He said he also asked if the Environmental Board could assume some of the responsibilities and if people could be appointed to a subcommittee of the Environmental Board and focus on sustainability. He said Mark said that would allow for consistent involvement by a dedicated membership, something that the original group did not have. He said they discussed the matter and told him he did not know if the board had any members that really wanted to jump into that.

Commissioner Rorick stated he had attended a few of the meetings when the group first started. He said it started out kind of strong and then immediately it lost strength.

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**(Reports of Officers, etc)** continued

Chair Hutchison stated the Sustainability Working Group's purpose was to look 30 years into future to see what the area would be like and what could one do to maintain sustainability regarding community environment and stewardship, transportation, energy and food. He said included in the group's interest was the watershed, which as reported was already taken care of.

Commissioner Rorick stated when he was involved he was trying to get something started in the food category and that was how the idea of community gardens got started in the city and the town.

Chair Hutchison stated community gardens were a nice idea and he had done the city's community garden for about 2 or 3 years but then the city put a \$25 fee on it. He said by the time one paid the fee, bought tomato plants and other supplies and maintain it the cost was about \$60. He said that was when he dropped out.

Chair Hutchison asked the board how it felt about the Environmental Board taking on the responsibilities of sustainability. He said the Mayor had originally asked that the Sustainability Working Group come under the auspices of the board and the board agreed and that the group would report to the board. He said Commissioner Allen was the board's liaison with the group. He said he had no problem with it staying the way it was. He said presently the group consists of one person.

The board held a brief discussion on the matter.

Commissioner Palladino suggested inviting Mark Davies to a board meeting to discuss the matter.

Commissioner Rorick stated he agreed with that and that he would not mind being involved in it and would contact Mark Davies.

**REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

The Chair indicated there were none.

**UNFINISHED/OLD BUSINESS**

**Discussion with churches about energy audits and energy efficient programs**

Chair Hutchison stated he has not done anything on that.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Chair Hutchison stated in regard to the recent announcement about the money Governor Cuomo gave to several districts of the State of New York in the Mohawk Valley district which Otsego County was part of and the county received nothing. He said Otsego County Planning, some other districts and the Mayor and he got together and discussed this. He said he was asked to sort of summarize the things the City of Oneonta has been doing. He said the city has been doing a lot. He said the city had Johnson Controls do an audit of city facilities and it was a horrendous report of every thing that would be done to change all of the city buildings to make them energy efficient and more. He said separate from Johnson Controls the city was working with New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) who was going to redo the Water Treatment Plant and were in the process of doing micro-turbines to generate electricity in the plant and also have some solar cells there. He said also in the Wastewater Treatment Plant, thanks to the Chesapeake Bay situation where federal stipulations were placed on the effluent from the wastewater treatment plants all the way along the way and then they were looking at a way by using gravel galleries where the water percolates down and also goes through the sub-straight where there were gravel layers which remove a lot of the nitrogen. He said the Mayor said by the time the city gets all of this done they city will have one of the best wastewater treatment plants in the State of New York.

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**(New Business)** continued

He said the city was also looking into solar panels. He said he had a written summary of the information for those who wanted to read about all of this. He said all should be proud of what the city was doing environmentally.

Commissioner Malone stated that the Johnson Controls was a multi-million dollar project and the city was expecting phenomenal savings out of it in terms of city expenditures.

Chair Hutchison stated that the city was also changing out of all the water meters.

Commissioner Malone stated that the new more efficient water meters can be read by a drive-by given their digital capability and feedback could be given to the homeowner on a more regular basis in order to monitor their usage and billing could be done differently. He said it was smart to do this and it was smart technology.

<b>ENDURING ISSUES OF THE RECENT PAST:</b>
• Southside Corridor
• Industrial Noise
• Delaware Recycling Program
• Rose Avenue area Brownfield Study
• Gas Drilling in City
• Manufacturing Gas Plant Remediation
• Treelawns and curbs
• Inquiries about disposal of green waste and kitchen waste into mulch compost from SUCO, Hartwick, Fox, etc
• Contract for solar electric leases

Chair Hutchison stated that there was nothing much to report on enduring issues. He said the issue of treelawns and curbs was brought up by petitioner Jonathan Gell and it was something that should be brought to the attention of the Facilities/Technology/Operations Committee when they do street reconstruction.

Commissioners Allen and Rorick spoke briefly about the disposal of green waste etc and compost from SUCO and they thought that was something the college was interested in doing.

Chair Hutchison stated that normally the board did not meet after May for the summer months unless there was a reason to. He said he could ask Mark Davies if he would like to come and speak at the beginning of the board's May meeting.

Commissioner Rorick stated he would also contact Mark Davies.

Commissioner Palladino suggested either meeting in June or stay in contact by e-mail to just review the tree plantings in order to follow that carefully to make sure what they think was going to get done gets done.

Chair Hutchison stated he agreed with that.

There being no further business to come before the board, Chair Hutchison adjourned the regular meeting at 8:15 p.m.

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JAMES R. KOURY, City Clerk

JRK/pab