

**ULSTER COUNTY  
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

Kristen Schara, Chair  
Victoria Lucarini, Vice-Chair  
Neil Rindlaub, Secretary



Meeting Minutes  
Regular Monthly Meeting *January 28, 2026 6:30 PM*  
*Hybrid Meeting* Via Zoom and in-person at SUNY Ulster Kingston Center, 94 St. Mary's Ave

*“The purpose of the Council shall be to review and advise the county and local governments on present and proposed methods of using, protecting and conserving the environment for the benefit of all the people.”*

With a quorum present, the regular meeting of the Ulster County Environmental Council was convened at 6:31 p.m.

Municipal Members Present	Kristen Schara (Chair; Hurley) Victoria Lucarini (Vice-Chair; Town of Ulster) Mark Ellison (Esopus) Jim Easley (Rochester) Emilie Hauser (City of Kingston) Dave Haldeman (Shawangunk) Carole Furman (Saugerties) Penny Coleman (Rosendale) Alan Newman (Marbletown) Ken Panza (Woodstock)
At-Large Members Present	Manna Jo Greene William More
Members Present via Videoconference	Roberta Clements (Gardiner) Rob Ferri (New Paltz)
Ulster County Staff	Andy Bicking, UC Dept. of the Environment Misha Kuznetsov (UCDOE)
Guests	Ann Peters (Saugerties County Legislator) Evelyn Laferriere (Hudson Valley Regional Council)

A link to the meeting agenda can be found here: <https://ulstercountyny.gov/environmental-management-council/emc-meeting-dates-minutes>

**Discussion/Approval of Minutes**

The Chair asked whether November minutes were distributed; Misha indicated they were not received from Neil (Secretary). Neil was not present; therefore, no minutes were available for approval and the minutes item was skipped.

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**Officer Elections (Annual)**

Officer selections were conducted as required at the first meeting of the year.

Proposed slate:

- Chair: Kristen Schara (Hurley)
- Vice Chair: Vicki Lucarini (Town of Ulster)
- Secretary: Neil Rindlaub

Motion to elect the slate for another year; second received; approved unanimously.

Legislative Liaison to Energy, Environment, and Sustainability Legislative Committee: Vicki agreed to continue in that role.

**Department of the Environment Announcements**

- **RFQ: Zero-Waste Event Coordinator (Green the Scene).** DOE issued an RFQ to hire a contractor to coordinate zero-waste practices at festivals and community fairs. This represents a shift from prior grants to organizers toward deploying a coordinator with operational expertise in recycling and food waste diversion.
- **CAC/Environmental Board outreach (2026 goal).** DOE plans to visit every municipal CAC/Environmental Board in Ulster County in 2026 to identify ways DOE can support local environmental and climate goals.
- **Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Silver recertification.** DOE is preparing the County's Silver recertification submission due in May.
- **META Contract with HVRC.** The Municipal Energy Technical Assistance (META) contract with HVRC is nearing final execution. Evelyn Laferriere introduced herself as the CSC/Clean Energy Communities Coordinator supporting Ulster and Orange County municipalities.

Vicki noted the Legislative Committee did not meet due to reorganization; the next meeting is February 4 at 5:00 p.m.

**CONTINUING BUSINESS**

**Leachate Loophole DEC Response**

Kristen Schara referenced DEC's response to the EMC's prior letter regarding landfill leachate handling.

Discussion points included:

- Concern that leachate is trucked to wastewater treatment plants, diluted with wastewater, and discharged into receiving waters.
- DEC's response was interpreted as focusing primarily on PFAS rulemaking while other contaminants remain concerning.
- Members raised concerns about whether upstream leachate testing is being emphasized versus

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final discharge concentrations.

- Discussion noted that rulemaking may focus on active landfills while excluding inactive/closed sites.

Members were encouraged to attend the DEC virtual presentation on February 11. The EMC will revisit the issue at the February meeting.

## **Roundtable Updates**

### **Town of Rochester - Jim Easley**

- Rochester is reviewing neighboring towns' Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs) that stop at its borders.
- The Town currently has no CEAs and will work with the Planning Board to evaluate whether designation is appropriate.

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### **Town of Shawangunk - Dave Haldeman**

- Organized a February 10 presentation for Town/Planning/Zoning Boards on Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) due to public safety concerns and misinformation.
- Referenced NYSAC presentation and evolving battery technology (Viridi).
- Zoning Board is considering pushing to ban BESS.
- Town will distribute 750 seedling trees at the St. Patrick's Day parade.
- Revisiting the solar law, specifically the definition of "mature trees" to prevent clear-cutting.
- Referenced long-running efforts (since 2006) to connect regional rail trail segments.

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### **Town of Saugerties - Carole Furman**

- Working on tree policy using tree caliper/diameter (~6 inches) as a threshold for approval before removal.
- Discussed a proposed Key Capture Energy BESS project near a substation in the industrial area.
- Shared understanding of container spacing, fire containment, and size of units (~railroad car size).
- Noted local interest in zero-waste implementation planning prior to facility development.

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### **Town of Woodstock - Ken Panza**

- Woodstock held its first meeting regarding leachate concerns tied to the Saugerties landfill and nearby Superfund implications affecting ~57 properties with DOH-supplied water.
- Submitted a letter supporting trails-only designation for a 1.8-mile former Ulster & Delaware rail corridor due to environmental constraints.
- Presented with an opportunity for a closed landfill biofilter project; MOU expected.
- Received a \$46,567 Complete Streets grant for a bike/pedestrian master plan between hamlets; expects public conflict due to tree removal and property impacts.
- Completed Drinking Water Source Protection study ~March 2025; still awaiting DEC approval.

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### **Town of Ulster - Victoria Lucarini**

- Leadership turnover has slowed progress on the Comprehensive Plan.
- Two BESS proposals: 250 MW (Coleman site) and 150 MW (GlidePath, expanded from 25 MW).
- Town Board issued a positive declaration (SEQRA) for the 250 MW project to allow further study.

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- Discussed a development requiring access through Woodstock; concerns that Woodstock has not been adequately included despite DEC direction.
- Noted Laura Hartman elected to Town Board.

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## **Town of Marbletown - Alan Newman**

- Installed 15 Level 2 EV chargers in October (24 total) via NYSERDA/CSC/Central Hudson funding.
- Marbletown Community Center: oil system removed, air-source heating installed; received \$1.2–\$1.3M state grant (≈\$1.6M total with match) for restoration and energy upgrades as a demonstration project.
- Reapplied for CSC Bronze; aiming for Silver next year.
- High Falls Water District energy audit found inefficiencies; planning a community solar project (RFP forthcoming).
- Collaboration with Rosendale on solar via \$100,000 County matching grant.
- Sanitary beach survey on Lower Esopus: DNA testing showed ruminants, not humans, as primary bacteria source.
- Multi-town coordination in the Pacama Vly area to align wetland protections.
- Two land conservation purchases (97 acres and ~90 acres); affordable housing potentially limited by water supply constraints.
- Mentioned upcoming Rosendale seed swap (March 22 or April 12).

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## **Town of Rosendale - Penny Coleman**

- Participated in festival waste audits (e.g., Pickle Festival) with DOE using orange gloves to sort waste.
- Referenced Rosendale’s use of a biodegradable, non-toxic roadside weed treatment formula and offered to share it.

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## **City of Kingston - Emilie Hauser**

- Raised awareness of the Ulster County Neighborhood Notification Law (2006) requiring pesticide signage and neighbor notification; CAC working with DOH to increase awareness.
- Noted air quality monitoring at the Andy Murphy Center and a lower “breathing level” monitor feeding into JustAir alerts.
- Observed PM2.5 spikes around July 5 (fireworks) and during wildfire smoke events.
- DOE noted 17 additional monitors will be installed countywide to create a broader air quality network.

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## **Town of New Paltz - Rob Ferri (via Zoom)**

- Working on a tree ordinance allowing timber harvesting on large parcels under a state-certified forester.
- Exploring combining the Town ECB and Village CAC into one entity.

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## **At-Large - Manna Jo**

- Suggested bringing in a professional conflict-resolution facilitator for long-standing rail-with-trail disputes, citing a past successful facilitation example in Saugerties.

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## **Town of Hurley - Kristen Schara**

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- Town completed and adopted a Natural Resource Inventory; planning an interactive GIS dashboard.
- NRI will feed into the Comprehensive Plan update (last plan 2006).
- Climate Smart goal to recertify by 2028.
- Town has a moratorium on BESS proposals; attorney preparing zoning recommendations for future siting.

**Action Items / Follow-Ups**

- Members encouraged to attend DEC webinar on February 11; topic to be revisited in February.
- DOE to share list of fairs/festivals for zero-waste outreach.
- Battery storage safety presentation video to be shared with interested members.
- Biodegradable weed-treatment formula (Rosendale) to be shared.
- Consider inviting fire training experts to a future meeting to discuss lithium battery fire response.

**Introduction of Speakers/Presentation**

Marc Rider presented on UCRRA's "Together, Toward Zero" initiative and the long-term transition toward waste diversion in Ulster County.

Highlights included:

- History of landfill closure (1997) and development of the Materials Recovery Facility and organics program.
- Growth of the organics facility from a 250-ton pilot to a currently permitted 7,500 tons of food waste, with a goal of 10,000 tons (site maximum).
- Reference to the County's 2019 Zero Waste Resolution and 2023 Executive Order calling for full diversion of organics by 2030.
- Approximate current waste profile in Ulster County:
  - ~3,500 tons reused
  - ~109,000 tons recycled/composted
  - ~180,000 tons disposed
- Introduction of the 30/60/90 diversion goals: 30% by 2030, 60% by 2040, 90% by 2050.
- Identification of a major barrier: lack of compliance with mandatory source separation.
- Noted that UCRRA will soon have a compliance officer, agency counsel, and independent hearing officer in place simultaneously, allowing enforcement and fines for noncompliance.
- Discussion of reliance on tipping fees as a revenue source, which can unintentionally incentivize disposal over diversion.
- Current tipping fees set at \$150 for haulers/general public and \$135 for municipal recycling drop centers to encourage use of town facilities.

Kristen adjourns meeting at 9:20pm.

Next meeting February 25<sup>th</sup>, location SUNY Ulster Kingston Center room 104. At 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Misha Kuznetsov, Ulster County Department of the Environment

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