

Stormwater Coalition of Tompkins County

Meeting Minutes

September 17, 2014

Attendees: Barry Goodrich, Darby Kiley, Creig Hebdon, Carl Martel, Lynn Leopold, Brent Cross, Scott Gibson, Sharon Anderson

Sharon Anderson, from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, presented on impairments to the south end of Cayuga Lake, as identified by NYSDEC, and the Cayuga Lake Monitoring and Modeling Project that has resulted. The southern basin of Cayuga Lake is on the NYSDEC 303(d) list for sediment, phosphorus, and pathogens. This listing started the process to develop a “total maximum daily load” (TMDL) for phosphorus loading to the south basin. As the first step the waterbody is being studied to determine pollutant loads and necessary reductions. As part of Cornell’s Lake Source Cooling SPDES permit renewal, they are funding water quality monitoring and models of the south basin of Cayuga Lake focusing on the sources and fate of phosphorus. Once completed, the model will enable NYSDEC to make a decision regarding the development of a TMDL for phosphorus. It is possible the study will show that it is not feasible to reduce phosphorus or that a reduction would not lead to sufficient water quality improvement to obtain the designated uses, which includes swimming. NYSDEC and the Tompkins County Water Resources Council hold public meetings at key points in the process, approximately every 6 months. Following the presentation, coalition members asked questions about how load reductions would be determined for each municipality, should a TMDL be developed with required non-point source load reductions. If you would like to review the presentation, please follow the link below:

<http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files/planning/water-resources/20140%20WRC%20TMDL%20presentation.pdf>

Sharon also spoke about the Climate Adaptation Flood Resiliency Project she is working on through funding from the Tompkins County Climate Protection Initiative (TCCPI). She asked for ideas and suggestions from coalition members for the project and spoke about the work that is on-going. The focus area for this project is creeks following through the City and Town of Ithaca. She is currently working with a graduate student at Cornell on proper culvert sizing in Fall Creek. Creig Hebdon spoke about the Town of Ithaca’s work on mapping their culverts and modeling flow through these culverts using HEC-RAS. The Town of Ithaca uses engineering interns every summer to collect to this data. Sharon will speak with Creig further about this work. Sharon also spoke about an education piece to this project, which would involve education on the following topics: how precipitation is changing, green infrastructure options and how they work, wetlands and their role, emergency stream intervention, and the County flood hazard mitigation program. An educational event would be organized for the Spring and would be targeted towards planners, highway staff, CAC members etc.

Scott Gibson spoke about the passage of the City of Ithaca stormwater management user fee. A fact sheet explaining the law, as well as copies of the law was provided. Coaliton members asked about incentives offered for stormwater reductions and whether residential properties were included. Scott explained that residential properties were not incentivized through this law as administrative oversight and implementation on a residential level would not be feasible with existing staff responsibilities. In addition, rate credits allocated to commercial and retail stormwater practices is admittedly somewhat limited when considering an acceptable rate to the residents (\$48/yr). That amount would undoubtedly need to increase should higher credits be allocated to larger users. Coaliton members also asked if a stormwater department within the City would be created. Scott explained that implementation of the program would continue to reside within the water/sewer department and mentioned a staff position/salary was included in the anticipated revenue.

Angel reminded coalition members that the green infrastructure tour is set for October 9th at 3pm-6pm and to distribute the flyer to anyone who may be interested.

Next Coalition meeting is scheduled for November 19th at 1:30pm (Town of Ithaca DPW).