

Community Advisory Group (CAG) Minutes for July 11, 2011

Present: Ken Deschere, Regina Deschere, Michele Palmer, Leia Raphaelidis, Peter Fortunato

Guest: Cynthia Brock

Minutes from the June 6, 2011 CAG meeting were approved with no revisions.

Agenda Additions and/or Deletions

Thank you to L. Raphaelidis for writing an Op-Ed piece describing ways homes can be made safer from contaminants. CAG should continue writing for public consumption.

CAG Presence on City Website: K. Deschere said our minutes are not posted due to Alice Vargo's retirement. Either N. Bohn or J. Dotson will pass along the identity of the staffer who will be picking up this task. K. Deschere said CAG Minutes will be posted on the SHIP website as well.

Cornell DesignConnect Project Application: Thank you to M. Palmer for drafting CAG's application. The DesignConnect group received 5-6 applications. Their decision will be made by July 15. M. Palmer said she was interviewed last week, and it went well. A question: "Who are our stakeholders?" M. Palmer replied CAG, community associations, individual homeowners. Community interest appeals to the students. The interviewer also asked if we view our project needs going beyond a semester's timeframe. We know that would be likely.

If CAG's project is accepted, a contract will be written and 3-4 CAG members would be needed to periodically meet with the students as their Client Committee. M. Palmer can serve as a faculty mentor, and Prof. Spaulding, an environmental mapping/GIS academic. *What would be the mapping boundaries?

*Goals would need to be written.

*A CAG member would acquaint them with the library repository.

*NYDEC assistance with digitized documents would be useful.

* \$400 fee if DesignConnect takes on CAG's project.

Service Learning at Cornell: M. Palmer said the CU Public Service Center could be a funding source, providing small stipends. A professor would need to serve as sponsor.

NYDEC Environmental Grants: Information forwarded by N. Bohn.

CAG apply to fund Cornell DesignConnect, if approved, or for funding for the city to hire a consultant for environmental issues? State funds for community gardens, green roofs, air/water quality, environmental justice, green worker training, etc.

C. Brock mentioned the Cayuga Watershed Network, a 501c3 organization, based in Aurora. Group is affiliated with Wells College and monitors lake source cooling and conducts water quality testing. C. Brock will send a link about them to CAG. Could they apply for a state grant?

C. Brock said it is interesting to consider who are the responsible parties for maintaining the watershed. Two years ago, 13 pounds of mercury were discovered during a Johnson Art Museum excavation; around a century earlier, the site was a chemistry building.

Cornell campus infrastructure has discharged into Fall Creek. What's upstream from Gun Hill?

P. Fortunato asked that applying for an environmental state grant be added to next meeting's agenda

so more specific goal brainstorming could be discussed.

Stormwater runoff quality: Discussion began about 2003 unfunded mandate. Stormwater utilities would be created by cities. Here \$300,000 out of the general fund. Property owners would be charged a fee based on square footage regardless of tax exempt status; emphasis on catchment systems. Treat at the source before runoff reaches the inlet, etc.

It will be easy for new construction, but M. Palmer said many sites are grandfathered, with not a scrap of stormwater mitigation onsite. Now, parking lots and roof runoff treated at the source. She mentioned Town of Ithaca is studying where to place a runoff plant in their problematic northeast. "Rain gardens" can address runoff issues.

EPA Report regarding sewage pollution in NY and NJ: K. Deschere said he would forward this email text he received for CAG.

PROJECT UPDATES:

R. Deschere relayed Stephanie Harrington's 7/11/11 update RE Ithaca Court Street (OU2). "NYSEG will be starting pre-design investigation fieldwork in Area 1. It will consist of soil borings and installation on groundwater monitoring wells. They will be working primarily in the right-of-ways and the street. The work is being done to support the design of both the planned excavations and the In Situ Chemical Oxidation (ISCO). Work is scheduled to begin 7/24/11 and should last 3-4 weeks."

Location starting at Court St., down Plain to Esty? Meadow Street was dug up by NYSEG. CAG believes NYSEG will measure and test each of the areas of this site, and the clean-up will be done well.

Therm Site: Karen Cahill did not address the name of this site. We will have to ask again. On 7/8/11, she said "we are expecting work plan from Therm next week and have mitigated two homes in the Phase VII area. One additional home still to be mitigated. We are discussing this home with Therm."

One to be mitigated is a Pearsall Place home with fine indoor air and a 2100 microgram per cubic meter subslab for TCE. That is four times higher than the largest TCE subslab test result in the Emerson Study Area R. Deschere noted.

K. Deschere said the NYSDEC database with test results can be GIS-mapped once street addresses are input. Knowing the level of pollution in a neighborhood leads to a solution. This remains on the follow-up list.

Future Meeting Topics: DesignConnect, Therm neighborhood mapping particulars, potential Environmental Justice Grant application, June 22nd BPW meeting and follow-up to CAG comment on the proposed 300-foot venting system at E. Spencer Street that is being installed to remediate environmental contamination, project updates.

Next Meeting:

Monday, August 1, 2011 at City Hall, 2nd floor Conference Room, 6-7:30 p.m.