

Steering Committee Meeting
Tuesday, April 3, 2018
3:00pm

Members Present: Leslie Baxter
 Ed Wagner
 Ken Post
 Greg Rejman
 Megan Bell
 Kathleen Cuddy
 Jim Sierzenga
 Deb McCormick

Meeting began at 3:04pm.

The group reviewed the minutes from the November 2017 meeting. The group was ok with the minutes as written, so Megan will put them on the project website.

Kathleen shared an agenda with the group that she had drafted. The group has not met since November, but updates were sent out to the group in January to share what had been done in regards to the internal work group over the past few months.

In November and early January the internal county work group, which consists of Health Department staff and Planning Department staff reviewed the current rules and regulations and revised any outdated language and information. They also reviewed Skaneateles Rules and Regulations and noted any information or language that would benefit our rules and regulations as well. When the group was reviewing the current rules and regulations they tried to take into account the Tompkins County sanitary code, especially in regards to discussions about septic systems.

In mid-January the internal work group expanded to include Seth Jensen, Director of Municipal Utilities from the City of Auburn, Doug Kierst and Bryan Hall from Soil and Water, Andrew Snell and Tim Schneider from the Watershed Inspection Program, Scott Cook from DEC Finger Lakes Water HUB, Judy Wright from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County, Eileen O'Connor and Kathleen Cuddy from the Health Department and Bruce Natale, Nick Colas and Steven Lynch from the Planning Department. The expanded work group began to look at different topics covered in the rules and regulation and the area of expertise that each agency brought to the table. They met approximately six times, however, some of the topic areas have still not been covered. The discussions often came to ideally what they would like done versus practicality and reality.

Kathleen shared that the work group can start presenting sections to the steering committee, however the steering committee needs to decide how they would like that process to go. Would the group like an outside facilitator to come in and help focus the discussion and keep the process moving? Most members of the committee agreed that an outside facilitator would be very beneficial and the most effective way to conduct the process.

Kathleen will look at some possible options for third party consultants/facilitators and get some costs associated with hiring them. Jim asked where the money would come from if we were able to get an outside consultant. Kathleen shared that depending on the cost there may be some money in the Health Department budget that could be offset by State Aid reimbursement, but would have to submit a resolution and get approval from the Legislature. The group could also reach out to some of the foundations in the area and see if there was any funding available.

Ed suggested doing a press release updating the public on what has been done thus far and what the plan is for the next few months. We will reach out to Gwen at The Citizen and share the meetings that have been held and who has participated in the meetings and the focus of the meetings.

The Group discussed whether they wanted to have another public meeting to update the public regarding progress the project has made. The group felt it would be better to wait until have something tangible that they can review and offer input on. The press release will provide the public with an update and assure them that we are still working on this project. A large part of this process will be public education. Many people are unaware of these rules and regulations and often think they only affect those that live on waterfront of the Lake. Public education will be key to implementing these changes successfully.

After a draft is developed it will be shared with the City of Auburn and Town of Owasco, they will adopt it and it will be sent to the NYS DOH. Ultimately they have the final say as to what is included in the draft. If the State approves them and they become Public Health Law then the other towns in the Watershed would be required to adopt them as well.

The group discussed the regulations the large farmers have to follow under CAFOs, but some of the smaller farmers are not bound by the same regulations and hopefully the best practices that are often included in CAFO's will be included in the updated Rules and Regulations so that all the farms are held to similar standards. It is difficult to regulate on a general basis as each farm land is different and that is where the benefit of the whole farm plan comes into play, however there is a huge shortage of certified planners statewide to assist the farms in developing their plan.

Kathleen shared that the Health Department would be receiving some funding to assist homeowners with septic replacements/repairs. They are still waiting for the guidelines as to how to determine who would be eligible for funding. The Department is hoping to largely target systems on the Waterfront that may no longer be acceptable by current code standards.

The group discussed the large scale weather events and their effects on the ditches and drainage tiles. Kathleen shared that there has been a group that included various town and county highway personnel meeting and discussing best practices when it comes to roadway and ditch maintenance specifically within the Watershed.

The Group discussed who they should reach out to in Tompkins County to get them engaged in the process. The group felt that we should reach out to Tompkins County Soil and Water, the Tompkins County Health Department and the Tompkins County Legislature in particular those Legislators that represent the Groton and Dryden areas of the County. The Group will reach out to the Town Supervisors of those town/villages again.

Next meeting: Megan will send out a doodle poll for dates in the next two weeks. The group will meet at Greg's farm for a tour.