

The Legislature of Rockland County



HARRIET D. CORNELL
Legislator – District 10
Chair, Environmental Committee

**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, October 1, 2014
6:30 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT

LEG. H. CORNELL, CHAIR
LEG. N. LOW-HOGAN, VICE-CHAIR
LEG. C. CAREY

MEMBERS ABSENT

LEG. CHAIR A. WOLFE
LEG. T. EARL
LEG. B. KANTROWITZ
LEG. F. SPARACO

OTHERS PRESENT

E. YEGER ESQ. LEG. D. JOBSON
K. GALIONE E. FUCHS-STENGEL
E. HELBIG A. PINZOW
S. LEVINE (Representing Hon. Nita Lowey)

CHAIR CORNELL CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 6:30 PM

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE 6/11/14, 6/25/14, 7/16/14, 7/30/14 & 9/10/14 MEETINGS

NO QUORUM

1. REF. #6311 - DISCUSSION/PRESENTATION ITEM – ROCKLAND COUNTY CONSERVATION & SERVICE CORPS (ACCOMPLISHMENTS) (FORMERLY ROCKLAND COUNTY AMERICORPS)
(HON. HARRIET D. CORNELL, LEGISLATURE)

DISCUSSED

K. Galione, Project Coordinator, Rockland Conservation & Service Corps, and E. Fuchs-Stengel, Outreach Coordinator and alumnus of the program, gave a presentation about the Rockland Conservation & Service Corps, which is a program about solving problems and has been working since 2000. It was part of a national service program and is now a local service program. The Corps rejuvenates parks, does disaster mitigation, trail building and maintenance, community beautification, environmental education for youth and adults, stream testing and analysis, landscaping and horticulture, environmental surveys and assessments, planning, and stormwater management/assessment. It compels youth to success and E. Fuchs-Stengel spoke about the leadership skills he learned in the Corps enabling him to begin his own successful environmental non-profit. 21 young people comprise the Corps at 7 sites, plus one site for the emergency response team. Rockland County has an extensive park system and the Corps surveys, identifies safety problems, and does repairs to the trails. They removed over 100 blockages at streams while partnering with the Rockland County Drainage Agency. K. Galione said, in April, the Corps began Community Disaster Preparedness Training to assist in the community until first responders arrive. The Corps have done GIS mapping work and mapped the hot spots for firefighters during the Clausland fire. The Corps creates civically engaged youth that invest in their community.

2. REF. #4124 - DISCUSSION ITEM – INPUT ON WATER USAGE
(HON. HARRIET D. CORNELL, LEGISLATURE)

DISCUSSED

E. Helbig, Water Conservation Education Coordinator, Orange County Water Authority, gave a presentation on the Watershed Design Guide, produced by the Regional Plan Association, the Orange County Planning Department, and the Orange County Water Authority. The sponsors of this new Design Guide are the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Compact, the NYS DEC and the Hudson River Estuary Program. The Watershed Design Guide is a tool to help planners, designers, developers and municipalities implement green infrastructure in new and existing projects. It was adopted by the Orange County Legislature as an amendment to the county comprehensive plan. The guide applies to other counties along the Hudson River Estuary Region with a focus on water, stormwater and watersheds, to promote Green Infrastructure methods for the entire region. The guide reflects the Hudson River Estuary Program's 5 point action agenda- ensure clean water, protect and restore habitat, provide water recreation and river access, adapt to climate change, and conserve scenery. The Design Guide follows the prescription for reducing runoff and improving groundwater recharge specified in the 2010 NYS Stormwater Management Design Manual and specifies the regulatory requirements for introducing Green Infrastructure, in plain English for non-engineers. It is a means by which communities can become resilient to climate change and global warming. Every municipal official, planner and resident has seen how intense storms can overwhelm our existing infrastructure. Changes, such as rising sea level, as well as, the increasing frequency of major storms and heavy precipitation events require improvement in stormwater infrastructure in every community in the Hudson Valley. A community's resiliency depends on adopting key aspects of green infrastructure, which is the combination of design and technology to slow runoff and calm streams in a storm to prevent flood damage and to eliminate the non-point-source pollution associated with runoff. The goal is: slow or eliminate runoff, let it pond and soak in, allow wetlands to flourish, and to keep surfaces permeable to water.

The Design Guide works at three scales:

- 1) Landscape scale- the scale of whole towns, watersheds, master plans, zoning and environmental review: Stream buffering and stream corridor protection and mitigation; Green corridors and connected green spaces to bring the ecosystem services of green space throughout an entire community; Stream daylighting to restore streams to a natural, functioning condition, wetlands construction and remediation to both ameliorate flooding and remove pollution from the water, and floodplain management techniques like bioretention basins and swales that conserve entire streams and landscapes.
- 2) Public Spaces scale- streets, plazas, parking lots and neighborhoods: At this scale, managing stormwater requires green infrastructure like vegetated swales and other types of vegetated bio-retention- places where runoff is slowed down so it can soak in. Permeable pavements slow down runoff and allow it to soak in and recharge groundwater. By connecting green spaces, we can create green streets that conserve the ecosystem services that green space provides: Air temperature regulation, wind speed mitigation, air purification, recreation space, community garden space, social gathering space, residential energy savings, crime reduction, noise reduction, neighborhood beautification, increased property values, environmental education and one's sense of personal well-being.
- 3) Building scale – what individual building and homeowners can do to limit the stormwater runoff on their property via permeable pavements, gutter downspouts that flow to permeable surfaces rather than to traditional storm sewers, rain gardens and green roofs, which work like the natural surface to absorb and filter rainwater

E. Helbig stated that the guide wasn't released yet, would be ready by the end of October, would include an interactive web-site, and that they are actively seeking input. Chair Cornell asked if the downspout disconnect would take the place of rain barrels? E. Helbig said that they could be done in conjunction or separately. He added that if water is not being used, the best place is to keep it in the ground. The Green Infrastructure designs involved are to prevent flooding.

ADJOURNED: 7:45 PM

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