Buffalo Environmental Management Commission

MINUTES
Meeting of Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Commissioners Attending: Joseph Gardella, David Hahn-Baker (by phone), John Hackney, Frank Armento, Michael Sendor. The meeting started at 8:05 AM.

Not attending: Charles Grieco

Others Attending: Dennis Sutton (staff), Council Member Kearns (8:40 AM)

Minutes: The minutes for February 2007 were approved.

SEQRA/ Sustainable Development
There was a general discussion regarding the letter from Commissioner Tobe to the Preservation Board regarding the Atwater House demolition. It was noted that there was no mention of SEQR review in the letter. F. Armento indicated that the City could make demolition a discretionary measure by having City Environmental Review Ordinance changed, thereby making SEQR apply to demolition activities. Suggestion was made in an attempt to prevent unnecessary demolitions. Other questions that arose included whether demo permits were subject to SEQRA review.

There was a general discussion regarding the City SEQR ordinance and State law and the need of the City to complete an inventory of historic buildings. There was a consensus that Commissioner Tobe should be contacted by phone to see if he was amenable to meeting to discuss the issues and potentially improving the process.

An Environmental Statement from the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York was received by the BEMC. The Authority has bonded funds to finance the remediation and development of the Union Ship green space area.

Council Member Kearns requested that BEMC assess whether the City can comment on SEQR issues that are outside the City but could affect the City. The proposed Wal-Mart near Mineral Springs and Ogden on the border with West Seneca was cited as an example where the City may wish to become involved in the project SEQR process.

Hickory Woods
Council Member Kearns stated that State funds were earmarked to undertake improvements in the Hickory Woods neighborhood. Council Member Kearns indicated that he would be meeting with the Corporation Counsel regarding the pre trial for the lawsuit and the potential for a global solution to the neighborhood issues. The importance of open communication with the residents and moving the project forward was discussed.

Denis Hayes Visit
Denis Hayes will be presenting on climate change in Buffalo on April 10th. He will be at the Church on Delaware and Tupper. Presentation is in conjunction with the UB Green Office and co-sponsored by BEMC. More details will be forthcoming.

Brownfields Update
No update at this meeting

Pest Management Board
The Pesticide Notification recently passed in the County Legislature and the Board is scheduling a planning session to determine its next course of action. The PMB is planning a retreat to reorganize and plan future actions. Specific items included the City's progress toward implementation of the pesticide sunset law and making PMB operations more efficient.

Greenhouse Gas
J. Gardella sent a letter to Mayor regarding recommendations for implementing a Climate Protection Plan for the City of Buffalo

City Forestry, Parks, Vacant Properties
Since the County is now the lead for forestry issues in the City there was a concern that the County would not follow the law that calls for the phase out of insecticides in the City. It was suggested that the City meet with the County to discuss these issues.

Awaiting feedback from Council Members Kearns and LoCurto regarding information from National Grid and Erie County's forestry practices, including planting, trimming and maintenance.

TIP Sheet
A tip sheet is to be generated monthly. Mailing list to include Common Council members, School Board, Wellness Institute, and Community Centers. February's tip sheet will discuss recycling topics.

Other
- Awaiting response to J. Gardella's letter to Mayor regarding update on Environmental Management Commission appointees. Letter copied to R. Tobe and T. Wanamaker.
- J. Gardella to receive BEMC files from B. Coleman's widow
- J. Gardella to check on the viability of an intern to utilize greenhouse gas software

Adjournment
Meeting adjourned at 9:50 AM. Next scheduled meeting is April 18, 2007, 8:00 AM.