

Meeting Notes

Rensselaer County MS4 Communities Meeting

Zoom

July 21, 2020

10:00 a.m.

The meeting started at 10:05 on CDRPC's zoom.

After a brief greeting, the meeting continued to item 2, Solar Farms on Ag Lands. In recent internet meetings with the NYS Association of County Planning Directors, Ms. von der Heide had been briefed on recent changes to New York State Law on Large Solar Farms. A new entity, the Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES) has been created that is charged with doing the environmental review and permitting of large (25MW and larger) solar power plants. Medium-sized power plants can also opt into these regulations. ORES has been given a limited time through the regulations to perform the environmental review and permitting of one year. The permits include all New York State and local approvals, but not federal permits such as federal wetlands. ORES has 60 days from the filing of an application to deem the application complete. After another 60 days, ORES must publish the draft permitting conditions. This starts the max 60 day public comment period on the draft permitting conditions. Local comment may be limited to that which would be regulated under local laws. After that, ORES could hold a public hearing, if it feels that a public hearing is necessary. Then the final decision is made or the proposed permit becomes the default. Other NYS departments such as Ag and Markets are also required to provide input into the permitting process. Schodack is having many solar farms proposed in the town with several interested in the fast permitting process. Schodack sends all solar farm applicants a form letter stating that the Town wants to have a PILOT with the applicant.

The third item on the agenda was GIS. The Town of East Greenbush received \$57,000 in WQIP money for creating and implementing a GIS oriented toward addressing MS4 requirements. The grant funding requires a 25% local match; total project cost is estimated at nearly \$75,000. They are using Enterprise GIS Arc-Online. Previously, East Greenbush had static maps, raw data in various formats, and no GIS-based work flow. The Town will procure field devices as part of the project to help maintain the GIS and implement the GIS workflows to be built in the new system. It is the Town's vision to build out this GIS platform to encompass other assets and workflows involving a spatial component.

Public Works plans to purchase an "Arrow" a high-accuracy centimeter grade GPS receiver to help maintain the MS4 data and expand the GIS platform to other assets, such as water and sewer system infrastructure. The Town will be implementing several workflows in Survey 123, which is an app that is part of the ESRI cloud environment enabling various field to office workflows, like construction site inspections. There will be a street sweeper app that automates records mileage swept using an ESRI cloud-based tracker app that will be configured to work meet the Town's requirements, including running on a tablet dedicated to the sweeper machine. All the information goes back to an MS4 database.

The Town will be implementing ESRI apps, such as Survey 123. The Town's consultant has said that ESRI products function best IOS and Apple devices. Needs are shared. The ESRI environment includes various modules and applications for the system. The Town is now focusing on business needs. The Town had a more active GIS program around 2008 and is hoping to be able to migrate existing data, such as catch basin locations, which are still available, into new system. There was system training funding in the grant.

The meeting then switched to East Greenbush's zoom.

The next item on the agenda was Local BMPs. The new draft MS4 SPDES permit is in the upper echelons and has been there for a while. The Annual Reports should have been e-mailed or sent to DEC Main Office by June 1st. E-mail address to send permits is:

Stormwater_info@dec.ny.gov

The Towns are moving projects forward, even in the time of COVID. Board activities are not on websites as much as they are on Facebook and YouTube for meeting streaming.

The Town of North Greenbush was audited by the EPA. No written report had been forthcoming as of the time of the meeting. North Greenbush has a new MS4 person, Eric Westfall, P.E. The EPA is doing abbreviated audits now and is contracting out their audits.

Attendees:

Linda von der Heide	Rensselaer County	518-270-2921/ Lvonderheide@rensco.com
Scott Gallerie	East Greenbush	
Nadine Fuda	Schodack	
Phil Koziol	LaBerge/Schodack	
Mark Hendricks	Rensselaer	
Adam Yagelski	East Greenbush	
Mary Barrie	DEC Region 4	

This year's meetings:

May 19, 2020

July 21, 2020

September 15, 2020

November 17, 2020