

Stony Brook University Senate
University Environment Committee
Meeting Minutes: June 11, 2024, 1-2:30pm
Approved at the UEC meeting of 9/11/2024.

Attendees: Malcolm Bowman, Joanna Kaczorowska, Gary Kaczmarczyk, Jonathan Oster, Christopher Percival, Mona Ramonetti, Sian Piret, Peg Spitzer, John True, Tom Wilson (co-chair), and Frederick Walter.

Agenda and Discussion:

1. Call to order and designation of recording secretary. The meeting was called to order by co-chair Tom Wilson. In the absence of a recording secretary, the meeting was recorded by unanimous consent for later minutes preparation.
2. Welcome and report from the co-chair. Co-chair Christopher Sellers had a conflict, so co-chair Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting, his last as co-chair, and thanked co-chair Sellers for his service over the last year. Barring a last minute candidate, Sellers will co-chair the committee with Mona Ramonetti beginning in September.

Wilson welcomed Jonathan Oster, chair of the recently reconstituted Medical School Environmental Committee, and invited anyone from that committee to attend UEC meetings.

Wilson noted that he walked into his first committee meeting seven years ago and walked out as Chair as a testament to the hazards of talking too much at meetings. Wilson thanked everyone for their support and hard work on the committee.

Wilson retired last month after 41 years at Stony Brook, but remains as an affiliate and an alumnus and hopes to continue as a volunteer for the committee. He thinks that this committee has made a difference and hopes it will continue to do so.

Wilson attended the Senate Coordinating Council meeting on May 23rd, gave a report on committee activities which he will put in writing and after running it by Chris put on the Senate website. UEC has more and better records of our work than almost any other Senate standing committee.

3. Consideration of minutes from the meeting of May 8, 2024. Wilson thanked Tiffany Freidman for taking the minutes. Peg Spitzer moved to accept the minutes as submitted with Sian Piret seconding. The minutes were approved without dissent.
4. Followups and status reports.
 - a) Ashley Schiff Preserve protection: coordinator Tom Wilson. Wilson reported continuing difficulties in getting responses from Bill Herrman, the VP of Facilities and Services.

According to Assistant to the President Judy Greiman, President McInnis' 2023 pledge was to fully protect all but "a couple of acres" along the north boundary of South Campus, with the South Campus boundary

In a May 2024 meeting between Wilson, Fred Walter, Peg Spitzer, Chris Sellers, and Herrmann, Hermann said that the formal boundaries would be from Nicholls Rd. to Marburger Drive and the existing South Campus to Circle Drive, less a small easements for utility and sidewalk, roughly corresponding to the existing grass verge. The mechanism for preservation would be transfer of the land to the NYS Parks Department. Hermann promised to provide the official paperwork but so far has not done so despite reminders.

Wilson recently contacted the Senate Executive Committee in regards to this. Current Senate President Richard Larson and incoming Senate President Brenda Anderson both see formal and permanent protection of the ASP as one of the signal accomplishments of the McInnis administration and do not want it to fade away with her departure. Larson and Anderson are going to make an official request for the updated survey, the exact request voted on by the SB Council, and the expected timeline for final action by the SUNY Trustees.

Fred Walter noted that there was nothing on the June 2024 SUNY BoT agenda regarding the ASP.

Wilson will prepare a final written report on the "Case for the Ashley Schiff Preserve" as soon as there is clarity on the status of preservation.

b) Energy working group: coordinator Chris Sellers could not attend. Chair reported that the working plan is to contact the administration to see what progress has been made since UEC issued its clean energy recommendations.

c) Composting: coordinator Sara Poon. Peg Spitzer reported that they are starting to meet starting in mid July to talk about the composting initiative and ways to get the word out.

d) Bike and pedestrian safety: coordinators Fred Walter and Chris Percival. Percival and Walter reported that the working group is revising a report first written in 2018 on suggestions to improve bike safety from east of campus into the campus bike path. Discussion ensued on the details of the draft report and on the deaths that have occurred from pedestrians crossing Nicholls Rd.

e) Sustainability / C4E, raising SBU's environmental ranking: no report.

f) Campus master plan and development. John True. Have documented the state of the forested area inside Circle Drive that will be cleared for the new Engineering Building, with intention to document the changes and make the argument that Stony Brook needs to build up not out.

Wilson had heard that another building will be constructed near Veterans Home but nothing on CPDC's webpage, which begs the question is there a separate department for

East Campus? Gary Kaczmarczyk clarified that the hospital has a separate construction group, and the Ronald McDonald House is being handled through a ground lease to a private corporation. In response to a question, Kaczmarczyk said that ground leases are handled through legislative action.

Kaczmarczyk said that there was a grant being administered by Anna Topolovik to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, and that having her present to the committee might be helpful.

Further discussion ensued about consequences of forest clearing, including displacement of deer and other wildlife. A question was raised regarding obtaining drone footage of areas being cleared. Kaczmarczyk noted that use of drones on campus requires prior authorization but that Campus Marketing and Communications has a drone and authorization to do flights over campus. A question was also raised about whether the new engineering building includes construction of parking spaces.

g) East Recharge Basin / Lake Briana: Wilson plan to reinstall a level sensor this fall and start taking data again. If a student can't be found to analyse data Wilson will do the data analysis. Wilson will contact Kaczmarczyk when it is time to reoccupy the site.

5. Old business not previously considered. None.

6. New business not previously considered.

Election of UEC Chair/Co-chairs for 2024-2025. No other candidates having been put forth, Peg Spitzer moved and Joanna Kaczorowska seconded the nominations of Christopher Sellers and Mona Ramonetti as co-chairs of UEC beginning in 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Wilson congratulated and thanked the new co-chairs, thanked everyone for their service to the committee, and wished everyone a good summer and success going forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:09pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Thomas Wilson