

# Climate Smart Task Force

## March 16, 2022 Meeting Minutes

### Meeting Attendees:

- Chair - Rayna Caldwell; Members - Dan Barusch, Tina Carton, Laura Faulk, Ben Foster, Jim Gallager, Deirdre Ladd, Anita Morzillo and Marilyn Rivers

### Public Comment:

- None

### Presentation to Council:

- Rayna, our Task Force Chair, offered to make a presentation at the April 5<sup>th</sup> City Council Meeting. The following is a recap...
  - On April 5<sup>th</sup>, Rayna, our Task Force Chair, presented to the City Council and public. It was a great presentation in which she reminded everyone of the 2011 commitment the City made to be a Climate Smart Community.
  - Rayna also outlined the current global situation with regards to the increased carbon dioxide in our atmosphere causing temperatures to rise, the problems with methane leaks and the increased severity of storms due to melting ice caps producing higher sea levels. Scientists say that giving the time lag with higher global temperatures, we will be in for 30 years of warming no matter what.
  - We need to take action! Not addressing our climate issues is already costing us billions. Locally, we had the economic loss of the race track closure due to extreme heat in August of 2017. So, what can we do in the City of Saratoga to help reduce fossil fuels usage, methane gas leaks, prevent mosquito and tick carried diseases, help our farmed crops, reduce reliance on National Grid, capture our storm water, keep our water clean, etc.? **We can develop and support a Climate Action Plan.**
  - This plan will prioritize issues and strategize best steps to address them. This plan will not just sit on a shelf. Actionable steps will be evaluated by feasibility and financial support. We already know some of the top priorities — transportation, buildings, plugs, waste, etc. and steps to take — Community Choice Aggregations, electrify cars, buses, lawn equipment and appliances, focus on wind and solar energy, reduce leaks to gain efficiencies, plant trees with good sized tree wells, compost organic matter, support local agriculture and emulate other city's plans and best practices (i.e. Ithaca's Green New Deal).

### Benchmark Study/Audit:

- Tina annually performs Energy Benchmarking of all City Buildings. The City's website shows a data visualization of the magnitude of energy use via our electricity usage via our National Grid Accounts. Some of the big users...The Ice Rink, the City Center, and the Water Plant.
- It would be good if we could do an audit to help identify savings. Perhaps the Task Force could then get a percentage of these savings to fund new projects. Dan will forward Lake George's audit.

- To determine commuter mileage by city employees in their personal vehicles, it was suggested HR be contacted, since they know where people live. Then a map could be created. This effort may help determine locations for affordable housing as well.

#### Community Solar:

- We are continuing to evaluate all the opportunities to be an anchor tenant and reap the benefits of a percent discount as well as a possible donation to a local non-profit. There are a number of farms. Therefore an RFP has been sent for best practice purposes. Sustainable Saratoga can also help spread the word on their Fb page.

#### Fire Stations:

- Chief Dolan is working on various energy efficient initiatives for Fire Station #3. The lighting has been upgraded to LED but there are many other opportunities. There are great ideas being suggested...solar panels on the roof, geo thermal infrastructure, battery backup if grid goes down, drop ceilings, etc. Need to meet again with Fire Chiefs, Marilyn, Tina, and Jim to discuss energy efficiencies with windows, lighting, insulation, etc. for Fire Station #2 as well. This was very effectively done for Fire Station #1.
- Laura noted there is an Energy & Storage Grant for improving the security of Emergency Response Systems. Jim and Laura will work on this.

#### CDTA & Bike Share:

- Per Ben's request, Tina forwarded the slides from CDTA's presentation to the group. It detailed their bike share program and plans, their trolley bus replacement, their partnership with CDPHP Cycle (note; there were 5,300 rides taken, electric scooters, electric vehicle/car ride share/door to door service).
- Tina is meeting with City Center and Tourism to further discuss the parking garage. The goal is to encourage parking one's car and then making people aware of the multi-modal transit opportunities. This led into a discussion about bike lanes and NYSDOT repaving Union Avenue from East Avenue to Henning.
- A Bike Network Map has been created by Complete Streets and Bike-a-Toga and will be shared with the Mayor and Finance deputies.
- EV Charging Stations - Laura to send info she has already gathered for a grant identifying which places seem attractive.

#### NYPA Streetlight Purchase:

- Consultant to send pricing to Tina for Sternberg lights. The City is purchasing all 3,000 streetlights from Nat Grid and replacing their bulbs with LED lights. This could be a \$7M project if all Sternbergs are upgraded to the City standard. The main purpose of the project is to purchase the street lights from National Grid and convert them to Led with NYPA. The next stage after the project is over is to move forward with a streetlight maintenance contractor that NYPA secured. The Sternberg streetlights are very special and energy efficient lights are super-insanely expensive (\$35 vs \$1500 per head). There may need to be a compromise on those since Broadway is our city's brand and the Sternbergs are historical, Victorian, and special.

Downtown Connector:

- Congratulations on the City signing the construction contract for the Saratoga Greenbelt Downtown Connector Trail. A 10' wide path is along High Rock and Excelsior is underway. 48 trees are coming down but 62 will be planted to replace them. The new trees will also be native to our area, where as the 48 being cut down were not.

NYRA:

- Rayna asked how we get the busses to stop idling at the Track. Can we plan a meeting to discuss a place for drivers to go into air conditioning at the Oklahoma Track rather than sit in their bus to stay cool? If it's presented as a way to keep the thoroughbred's delicate and valuable lungs healthy – we may get some cooperation. Deirdre will look into this.

*Minutes respectively submitted by Deirdre Ladd*