

Climate Smart Task Force of Saratoga Springs

Date: April 20, 2022 Time: 9 AM



Minutes

Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82166862773>

Attendees: All Task Force Members (Rayna Caldwell, Tina Carton, Ben Foster, Dan Barusch, Jim Gallagher, Deirdre Ladd, Marilyn Rivers and Anita Morzillo); Plus, invited guest - Deputy Mayor Angela Rella. Laura Faulk also attended as a guest.

Minutes: Marilyn Rivers made a motion to accept March's meeting minutes and Tina Carton seconded it. It was unanimously approved.

Meetings: To be held on Zoom until June. ***NOTE: There will be a quick meeting tomorrow, May 5th, via Zoom to discuss DEC grant opportunities.

Fire Stations: Members of the Task Force met with the Mayor to review plans for the new fire station on Henning Rd. (Station #3). Although the release of the blueprints is eminent, Jim Gallagher made some recommendations to include language within the RFP for proposals to include increased energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies to the project. Mr. Gallagher is working with Tina Carton and Marilyn Rivers to review the RFP and the blueprints. Jim also spoke to Hunter Johanson regarding what was learned from major outages in Puerto Rico that resulted from Hurricane Maria. It would be good to use these learnings as the basis of a showcase resilient, energy self-sufficient fire station in NYS; one in which would support Gov. Hochul's vision within the state of the state address.

These suggestions do come late to the process. The Committee hopes that there may be opportunities to still include some renewable energy ideas beyond simply meeting code requirements at this to-be-built station. Jim, Tina, and Laura Faulk are also looking into NYPA initiatives and grants for emergency response facilities and battery storage back up. Perhaps an addendum could be added to the documents compiled by the construction firm, Huber Bruer.

The Fire station on West Ave. (Station #2) is in need of repair and it has a flat roof, making it a potential location for some climate smart upgrades (i.e. solar panels).

The Fire station on Lake Ave. (Station #1) is a historical building with restrictions as such. However, there may be a chance to do a few improvements.

Deirdre Ladd added that there could be an opportunity to use the money saved this year from accumulation of the solar credits on the city's electricity accounts. All past and present solar credits that were accumulating and not being applied should now be going to pay our National

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Grid metered account bills. The 2022 budget *did not* reflect this savings. Since the Solar Park is a city Climate Smart initiative, the money being saved, should help pay for other city climate smart initiatives, such as fire station upgrades.

Stretch Code Meeting: Rayna and Tina met with Patrick Hogan in Building & Planning to review and discuss the housing codes. There is a short-term expense with regards to environmental initiatives, but the long-term savings are well worth it and eventually off-set the increased costs. The Mayor will be working with Patrick to better understand opportunities with affordable housing incentives. Tina suggested budgeting for code compliance technology (\$50K) which will help make the code compliance process easier. Getting funding to streamline the process and have it be online will be very beneficial.

Infrastructure Meeting: Rayna Caldwell, Tina Carton, and Deirdre Ladd attended. Priorities are still being discussed. At the end, Deirdre asked Joanne Yepsen, the committee chair, what she saw as the priority. Joanne Yepsen said she'd like to focus on infrastructure initiatives around safety and ones that checked multiple boxes (i.e. safety *and* environmental initiatives such as bike lanes).

Climate Smart Action Plan: Rayna Caldwell, the committee chairperson, brought up the fact that these plans are now becoming a pre-requisite for grant applications. It is our committee's main task. The City needs something that helps to track goals and involves all city departments. Rayna is excited to work with Dan Barusch specifically on this because he has experience shepherding a Climate Smart Action Plan through the Village of Lake George. Rayna (and the Mayor) want this plan to be short and concise. When asked what she is most concerned about, Rayna says the safety of Saratoga Springs' water; everything from its supply in case of a drought, what preparations we have for extreme weather (i.e., flooding), how we can prevent contamination, and improve our pipe infrastructure, etc.). Therefore, the Task Force will prioritize actions that help promote water safety at this time.

Electric Cars and EV Charging: The purchase of a new, electric car has been approved. This will be the third in the city's fleet. White Plains' Mayor Roach is working to electrify their city's fleet and has even purchased police cars. DPW published its 2021 annual report and it lists all the vehicles. Marilyn Rivers will send Rayna the fleet vehicle report that has all vehicles and their VIN#.

Gas Leaks: Rayna Caldwell discussed the concern about methane and natural gas leaks, their environmental impact, and ways we can detect them. Commissioner Dillon Moran and Rayna will talk with National Grid about the assessing and handling of such leaks. National Grid outsourced this task 6 years ago. Rayna will work with the Interim DPW Commissioner, who will be announced on May 3rd, as well.

Downtown Connector Trail: Tina Carton updated the group on the commencement of construction along High Rock and Excelsior. She noted that the Wednesday Farmers Market will be temporarily moved to the bottom floor of the parking garage and continue to be in the

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Wilton Mall on Saturdays until June 1st. Many trees will need to come down but nearly 20 more will be planted in replacement.

Anniversaries: This year marks the fifth anniversary of both the solar park and the Tree City certification. It may be an opportunity to celebrate achievements, gain publicity and do something additional (i.e. plant more trees and pollinators and/or invest in technology to capture/measure methane gas out at the transfer station. Another idea would be to have bags of composting on sale – The Anniversary Edition. DPW now has a new composter and a new tree stump grinder. Ben and Deirdre will discuss pollinators and planting opportunities.

Sustainable Saratoga: The “Green Drinks” events are back. Harvey’s will continue to host the gatherings monthly from 5pm-6:30pm.

Tree Toga & The City’s Urban Reforestation Project: This fun community event took place at Pitney Meadows Farm on April 30th. It was a big success! Tina Carton, Deirdre Ladd, Commissioner Minita Sanghvi, Deputy Commissioner Angela Rella and Steve Lashcomb (City Arborist/DPW) were all in attendance – along with 100+ other people, including Tom Denny, Wendy Mahoney and many other long-time volunteers. Everyone pitched in to plant trees throughout the city. DPW had purchased and stored the trees and local residents and organizations supported having them planted on their property.

Earth Day: Commissioner Dillon Moran is forming a committee for the City to make plans to celebrate Earth Day in a bigger way in 2023.

Local Environmental Entrepreneurs: Deirdre will introduce some local entrepreneurs to the group to find out more about their businesses and how we may be able to support their endeavors. (Jeff Olsen, Ray Apy, Carol Maxwell and Chris Smith, from Plug Power were a few people mentioned). Jim will share info from the State of the State as well as regional hydrogen hubs in Stonybrook and Brookhaven.

Next Meeting: Moved to May 25th, since our chair will be out of town.