



Minutes

Climate Smart Task Force of Saratoga Springs

July 26th, 2023

In Attendance: Chair Laura Faulk, Rayna Caldwell, Deirdre Ladd, Dan Barusch, Ben Foster, James Gallagher, Jamil Khan, Anita Morzillo, Tara Donadio (CDRPC), Jennifer Ferris (Saratoga Springs Public Library)

City Staff in Attendance: Dan Rancour, Michael Dutre, Brooke VanBuskirk

Absent: Heather Crocker, Jen Dunn, Dianna Goodwin

Public Comment: No members of the public were in attendance.

Approval of June Meeting Minutes: The minutes were approved as read.

New Committee Member: Jennifer Ferris of the Saratoga Springs Public Library will become a new member. She is involved with international library sustainability efforts. Dianna Goodwin felt she couldn't contribute as much as she would like to Climate Smart.

LED Streetlight Project:

Brooke VanBuskirk informed the group that DPW, finance and the mayor's office have been meeting on the final steps of streetlight conversion. Michael Dutre added that a \$10,000 insurance fee has to be paid but finance is working on it.

Chair Faulk and Dan Rancour reviewed a letter to the mayor's office from 'Softlights' that claimed LED lights were harmful and that they should be banned. Chair Faulk and Dan Rancour advised the mayor to disregard as LEDs are heavily deployed throughout the country and there isn't sufficient scientific validity to the claims.

Champlain Hudson Power Express – Community Benefit:

James Gallagher asked for an update on the city's request to extend the public comment period on CHPE's provided engineering materials. Especially, since CHPE is going through regional lands and waterways. Michael Dutre said he would look into that matter.

Michael Dutre updated that city engineers met with CHPE to go over which assets and locations are within the city and which belong to other municipalities. Also, Jen Dunn is exploring CHPE's community development funding for climate smart, complete streets and open space related projects.

Deirdre Ladd of Carrie Woerner's staff recalled that Michael Dutre sent her office a Letter of Support request for an Urban Forestry grant recently and asking CHPE for additional help is a good strategy.

Tara Donadio of CDRPC mentioned that grant funding can be difficult as the city was recently reclassified to have 'no disadvantaged communities' however it is important to check other tracts.

Dan Barusch agreed with Tara Donadio that north of Albany, only parts of Glens Falls qualifies as disadvantaged. There is a green economy fund through CHPE that could be used for green job creation. There may be an opportunity to partner with BOCES and Skidmore on this.

Michael Dutre will check if the city has some 'environmental justice' areas that coincide with former 'disadvantaged communities.'

DPW 2023 Capital Budget: \$225,000 EV infrastructure, vehicles and equipment funds:

Chair Faulk requested clarification on DPW's new infrastructure initiatives. Brooke VanBuskirk outlined that DPW is interested in electrifying to reduce emissions and increase energy efficiency. Chair Faulk will give her NYPA contact over to DPW staff as they plan these upgrades.

Ben Foster saw a mailer from National Grid offering incentives to customers installing gas appliances. This is a mixed message as National Grid also says they are working toward electrification.

James Gallagher added that they do not want to 'let go' of their legacy transmission assets.

Rayna Caldwell expressed concern as many Americans are unaware of the Inflation Reduction Act and the rebates offered for green products are actually more robust than what National Grid is advertising.

Deirdre Ladd reminded Brooke VanBuskirk that a key project DPW could take on is implementing recycling in the city. There are still only garbage cans on Broadway for example.

Climate Action Plan:

Dan Barusch notified Climate Smart that the RFP team is working on scoring the bids. As they get closer to completion, it will be necessary to coordinate with the mayor's office on an interviewing team and schedule.

Meeting Adjourned.

Next meeting, August 16th at 9am