



# Minutes

## Climate Smart Task Force of Saratoga Springs

August 16th, 2023

**In Attendance:** Chair Laura Faulk, Rayna Caldwell, Dan Barusch, Ben Foster, James Gallagher, Anita Morzillo, Jamil Khan, Jen Ferris

**City Staff in Attendance:** Jen Dunn, Michael Dutre, Brooke VanBuskirk, Jesse House

**Absent:** Deirdre Ladd

**Public Comment – 5 Minutes:** Jacob Gardner moved to the City recently and wants to be more involved in the community. He works in energy efficiency for water and wastewater systems and has been working with a few climate smart communities this year.

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

**Climate Action Plan:** Chair Faulk announced that the Climate Action Plan RFP Bid Evaluation Team was ready to make a recommendation to the City on which consultant to select. She thanked Dan Barusch and the CAP Evaluation Team for their work evaluating the proposals, checking references, and conducting interviews with some of the bidders. A public announcement will be made after the bidders have been notified of the evaluation results.

**LED Streetlight Project:** Brooke VanBuskirk updated Climate Smart that DPW and Finance are compiling the final items on their checklist to secure closing in September. The \$50k NYSERDA grant for the project may be used towards the purchase of the streetlights.

**Champlain Hudson Power Express Community Benefit:** Jim Gallagher asked if the City was ever granted more time to review and respond to the engineering materials sent by CHPE. Jen Dunn explained that the City engineers were able to review the plans but there was never a chance of slowing the large state-wide project. Despite this, there is an opportunity to obtain Community Benefit funds for upcoming sustainability initiatives such as the Crescent Ave multi-use path.

Jim Gallagher pointed out that accessing grant funding can be made more difficult since the City has been removed from NYS 'disadvantaged community' government maps. Jamil Khan highlighted that CHPE may have more leeway than government funding sources so it is important to reach out and pitch them a strong project soon.

The CSTF continues to be interested in having the City create a sustainability fund created out of the City's share of funds from the CHPE PILOT agreement with Saratoga County. The fund would be used for sustainability projects and matching funds for sustainability related grants.

The Task Force discussed creating a subteam to work with local education providers and other organizations focused on workforce development to ensure they are aware of the CHPE [Green Economy Fund](#).

**DPW 2023 Capital Budget \$225,000 EV infrastructure, vehicles, and equipment funds:** Brooke VanBuskirk outlined that DPW is planning to install additional EV chargers in city-owned garages. They are also looking at replacing aging fleet vehicles with EVs. Further, they are investing in more efficient and quieter equipment to maintain Congress Park. Michael Dutre said he would forward Brooke VanBuskirk the backup documentation for a previous electric vehicle purchase and rebate he has in his records.

**City Waste Management and Recycling:** Brooke VanBuskirk responded to a point that Deirdre Ladd made during the previous Climate Smart meeting on the City's lack of recycling receptacles on Broadway. While there are private options to recycle residentially, implementing a City-led recycling program may be more complicated than the team initially realized. Jen Dunn brought up that Jen Armstrong of Sustainable Saratoga has already done extensive research with other municipalities on composting and recycling. Jen Dunn will reach out to see if Jen Armstrong would be interested in speaking to Climate Smart.

**Inflation Reduction Act Incentives and Communication:** Chair Faulk was aware of the recent IRA Communication webinar but was unable to attend. She asked what Jesse House's thoughts on the event were. Jesse House's takeaway was that the IRA is popular but many Americans are not aware of its existence, success, or the incentives. Because it is the anniversary of the Act's passing, she would like to do a press release or social media shout out as well as take a photo of climate smart for the web.

Jamil Khan mentioned that climate week is coming up in mid-September as well so a social post then too would make sense. Michael Dutre added that the webinar suggested to reach out to contractors and developers since they are a key interface with homeowners who may switch out to greener technologies. Jen Dunn agreed that contractors can be a lynchpin. If they are not aware of IRA incentives then the homeowner likely will be in the dark as well.

Jamil Khan pointed out that IRA policies are so expansive and are still being released so it can be overwhelming for a layperson and/or a homeowner to understand. Chair Faulk offered that the 'Rewiring America' website is more user friendly than the IRA page and it may be a better place to send people to for information. Ben Foster feels that one of Climate Smart's jobs is to help educate the public on potential IRA incentives and moving toward a greener city. Jen Ferris wants to see a stronger partnership between Climate Smart, Sustainable Saratoga and the Library, especially as the Climate Action Plan moves forward.

Chair Faulk mentioned that both Sustainable Saratoga and The Climate Reality Project are engaging in IRA, NYS, and utility financial incentives outreach with local communities and organizations. The CSTF was invited to co-host an outreach event.

**Meeting Adjourned.**

**Next meeting, October 18 at 9am**