



## Minutes

### Climate Smart Task Force of Saratoga Springs

September 20th, 2023

**I. In Attendance:** Chair Laura Faulk, Rayna Caldwell, Ben Foster, James Gallagher, Anita Morzillo, Jennifer Ferriss, Tara Donadio, Jacob Gardner

**City Staff in Attendance:** Heather Crocker, Beige Berryman, Michael Dutre, Brooke VanBuskirk, Jesse House

**Absent:** Jen Dunn, Jamil Khan, Dan Barusch

**II. Public Comment – 5 Minutes:** There were no public comments.

**III. Approval of August Meeting Minutes:** The minutes were adopted as written.

**IV. Climate Action Plan:** Michael Dutre said his DEC contact was happy with the work plan submitted in Grants Gateway and work is progressing on finalizing the DEC grant contract. Laura Faulk asked if the City is ready to reach out to the CAP bidders. Michael Dutre will confirm with Jen Dunn on bidder communications.

**V. LED Streetlight Project:** Heather Crocker explained that the City is on track for an October closing date. There was a minor insurance formatting issue that finance corrected.

**VI. Champlain Hudson Power Express Community Benefit:** James Gallagher requested an update on CHPE status and confirmation that all necessary permits have been obtained including for impacted wetlands and street crossings. Michael Dutre informed the team that CHPE is working with the engineering department on identifying impacted municipally owned assets and will follow up with engineering on the permitting question. Michael Dutre reiterated that the City can propose projects to be funded by the CHPE Community Benefit and Green Jobs funds. Chair Faulk recommended that the Task Force form a working group to conduct outreach to local entities who may be eligible for funding from the Green Jobs Fund. The following people offered to be members of the working group: Beige Berryman, Jesse House, Anita Morzillo, Jacob Gardner, Jim Gallagher, Deirdre Ladd, and Brooke VanBuskirk. Chair Faulk will organize the group.

**VII. DPW 2023 Capital Budget: \$225,000 EV infrastructure, vehicles, and equipment funds:** Brooke VanBuskirk stated that DPW is prioritizing EV infrastructure but there are concerns about staffing, equipment, maintenance and return on investment. Heather Crocker asked if there were any CSTF members with experience in EV fleet management policy. Chair Faulk

suggested that we start by asking Dan Barusch and Tara Donadio and will send an email to them to get the conversation started, copying Heather and Brooke.

The team agreed that DPW EV and equipment electrification projects would be good topics for a press release and/or social media communications. Jessie House and Brooke VanBuskirk agreed to work on this. Rayna Caldwell offered to help by writing up community co-benefits for these projects.

Deirdre Ladd pointed out DPW should also prioritize recycling and composting. Brooke noted that DPW had requested funding for an additional employee to support waste management and recycling but that it was not granted for 2024. If capacity is an issue, then a third party contract may be the solution. DPW is currently waiting on the delivery of a waste and recycling truck. Jennifer Ferris suggested that the City could add recycling and/or composting fees for large events like Chowder Fest or require the hosts to contract with a recycling firm to make those events more sustainable without increasing costs to the City. This suggestion was widely supported by the Task Force. Chair Faulk added that Jennifer Armstrong with Sustainable Saratoga's Zero Waste Committee should be at the next meeting to discuss Sustainable Saratoga's work on recycling and composting in the City.

#### **VIII.** Report out from the [Locally Sourced Municipal Green Policy Solutions Conference](#)

##### **a. Perpetual funding source for grant matching funds**

###### **i. City of Cohoes [Presentation from the Locally Sourced Conference](#)**

Michael Dutre reported the City of Cohoes is doing impressive work on creating a self-sustaining grant matching fund using savings from their street-light conversion. The City of Cohoes planner has offered to present to Council members and staff. Heather Crocker is interested in participating.

##### **b. Matching Fund Grants from National Grid**

i. Chair Faulk reported that Cohoes has also been successful in procuring grant matching funds from National Grid. James Gallagher suggested that we invite National Grid to a future meeting to discuss community benefits and other applicable topics. Michael Dutre will reach out to the City's contact at National Grid and invite them to a future meeting. It was also suggested that we invite a representative from NYSERDA.

**c. [Cohoes Municipally Owned Floating Solar Array](#)** Chair Faulk said that the City of Cohoes is releasing an RFP to construct a floating solar array on their drinking water reservoir which would be one of the few in the United States. Funding didn't exist for such a project previously but Congressman Tonko helped make it possible. Loughberry Lake is a possible candidate for floating solar.

#### **IX.** [NYSERDA Solar Canopies for Parking Lot Build Ready Program](#)

- a. [City of White Plains Community Solar Portfolio](#), **City property solar leases** Chair Faulk pointed out that the City of Cohoes opted for a municipally owned solar array but that another model for communities to support the deployment of renewable energy and earn income from some of their property is to lease the property for solar development. The City of White Plains makes around \$1,000,000 annually through leases alone. Their portfolio includes municipally owned rooftops and parking garages/lots.
- b. Chair Faulk brought to the Task Force's attention NYSERDA's Solar Canopies for Parking Lot Build Ready Program which is currently accepting nominations for parking lots. The program includes solar canopies paired with EV charging stations and battery storage if suitable. Based on the information supplied by NYSERDA, this appears to be a very low risk proposition for the City and was supported by the Task Force. James Gallagher offered to look into the proposal in more detail and offer his opinion as to whether or not the City should proceed with nominating a parking garage or garages. Ben Foster suggested that the City's nomination is more likely to be considered by NYSERDA if there are additional development opportunities in the City. He suggested that the City and Climate Smart should approach owners of other lots in the City such as the school district. Brooke VanBuskirk said that DPW has contacts at the school district. She will look up those contacts. The Task Force agreed that it would be beneficial to invite the school district to send a representative to Task Force meetings.

#### **X. Sustainability Committee Chair Meeting Report Out**

- a. **Task Force public facing communication** Chair Faulk feels the Chair meeting was beneficial since there is overlap between Climate Smart, Complete Streets and Open Space. The group determined that communication with the public should be bolstered. Jesse House offered to help by coordinating with committees, writing press releases, posting to social media and assisting with events.

#### **XI. Next meeting, October 18th at 9am**

**Meeting Adjourned.**