



Minutes

Climate Smart Task Force of Saratoga Springs

Wednesday, November 16th, 2022

Meeting Date: Wednesday, November 16th, 2022

In Attendance: Chair Rayna Caldwell, Anita Morzillo, Laura Faulk, Dan Barusch, Jim Gallagher and Deirdre Ladd, Ben Foster, Dianna Goodwin

Absent: Heather Crocker, Marilyn Rivers

Staff in Attendance:

Tina Carton, Michael Dutre

Public Comment: No public comments.

Update on City CDBG Grant: Chair Caldwell has not received an update. The Mayor allocates around \$200,000 of Community Development Block Grant funding each year for the arts, social services and environment. Chair Caldwell asked that Laura Faulk and Sustainable Saratoga come up with ideas for the grant's Climate Smart administration.

Tina Carton mentioned that large commercial owners are seeing what the YMCA is doing and may be interested in solarizing. With high electric costs, green energy is becoming more attractive to big businesses.

Laura Faulk brought up the benefits of using Community Solar but unfortunately there is a lot of misinformation surrounding solar companies. Many residents are skeptical since they have been burned before by bad actors and scammers.

LED Streetlight Conversion Update: Tina Carton updated the Task Force that City Council authorized to proceed with a maintenance agreement for the streetlight conversion. Rates go up after December 1st so time was of the essence. Jason West of the Energy Department in Albany reported around \$2 million in savings. There is some administrative burden to maintain the lights but only around 8 hours per week. The savings from the program should cover maintenance costs.

Deirdre Ladd asked how will savings be tracked and who will see that information since it's important to have evidence that these undertakings work. She expressed that it would be beneficial to have Jason West speak to the Task Force on any other NYPA projects that Albany is implementing.

Laura Faulk agreed it would be useful to hear more about the other NYPA projects Jason West is working on. For convenience, maybe he could Zoom in and do a quick 5 minute presentation for the Task Force rather than driving from Albany.

Dan Barusch added that from a risk management perspective it's important that we know who has ownership over maintenance. If an asset is city or non-city is important from the legal side of things.

Tina Carton said that NYPA maintains the lights after the conversion process is complete. The target date for completion is September, 2023.

Jim Gallagher explained that part of NYPA's role is to periodically audit. If they don't, they are subject to significant penalties. They communicate with National Grid and make sure that the City's bill is appropriately adjusted.

Draft Open Space Plan for Review: Tina Carton thanked Anita Morzillo for helping with the Open Space Plan. The draft is on the City website if members of the Task Force are interested in providing feedback and edits. The goal is to make it readable and not so lengthy. The document outlines land to purchase, purchase methodology, long-term maintenance, climate change and equity among many other things. Public input was included through a survey with around 350 respondents which is a great sample size.

Local Methane Emissions: Choices to Make: Chair Caldwell described local methane emissions as a chicken-or-the-egg problem. Leaky pipes are expensive to replace infrastructure but necessary. Utility companies are concerned about 'stranded assets' if a community moves on to solar.

Jim Gallagher pointed out that they need to fix methane issues for safety. There is no logical argument against that.

Chair Caldwell will work with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor since they are interested in these conversations with National Grid.

Inflation Reduction Act Incentives: Getting the Word Out: Laura Faulk highlighted the upcoming Sustainability Fair in April, 2023 but an earlier workshop may be possible. A potential event could walkthrough how to discover your energy footprint and how to take advantage of IRA savings. It may be better to use the word 'save' rather than 'IRA' for public outreach. She may end up partnering with the library on this.

Strategy Session Advance Work: Chair Caldwell suggested to Anita Morzillo that the Task Force take strategy cues from Pace University School of Law. While not necessarily designed for the same wheelhouse of topics, there is no need to reinvent the wheel.

Anita Morzillo put forward that the Task Force needs a streamlined process with specific desired outcomes. Think through what is wanted then ask questions on how to get there. What will the barriers be?

Chair Caldwell feels that face-time with commissioners is important and the Task Force needs to find the best methods to interact with both the city and public going forward.

Deirdre Ladd will work with Chair Caldwell to find what other Climate Smart Groups are doing. There may be green programs the Task Force is not aware of.

- A. Meet with Commissioners**
- B. Setting Goals**
- C. Research What Other Climate Smart Groups are Doing**

Transportation: Tina Carton informed the Task Force that Enhancing Union Avenue had some pushback from a few homeowners. The plan is for the roadway to receive granite curbing, storm water upgrades, revised median, north-side sidewalks and a bike lane.

Reconnecting the West Side is able to pull from State Touring Route Money. DOT has a Reconnecting Communities Grant that is designed to unify neighborhoods cut off by railroads and major highways. There is low income housing coming to the west side that will house around 200 families so this is of crucial importance.

CDTC Truck Origin/Destination Study may help clarify which streets require truck route mitigation. For example, the data shows that streets like Broadway, Washington and Church are seeing high truck numbers.

- A. Enhancing Union Avenue**
 - B. Reconnecting the West Side Project**
 - C. Grant Submittals Pending**
- a. Federal DOT Safe Streets and Roads for All**
 - b. CDTC Truck Origin/Destination Study**

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant: Laura Faulk proposed that the Task Force prioritizes projects that are the most 'shovel ready.' Perhaps, Delta Development Grant Consultants can assist on this.

Member News: Jim Gallagher is going to an emergency climate conference in Vienna. Various European countries are participating to collaborate on their responses to climate change. He will report back to the Task Force with any news.

Minutes: Last meetings minutes were approved by the Climate Task Force.

The next meeting is December 14th, 2022.

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes were respectfully submitted in joint effort by Michael Dutre and Deirdre Ladd.