



Minutes

Climate Smart Task Force of Saratoga Springs

Wednesday, December 14th, 2022

Climate Smart Task Force Minutes

In Attendance: Chair Rayna Caldwell, Laura Faulk, Jim Gallagher, Deirdre Ladd, Heather Crocker, Ben Foster

City Staff in Attendance: Michael Dutre

Absent: Dan Barusch, Anita Morzillo, Marilyn Rivers

Public Comment: No public comments.

November Minutes: Approved.

Update on City CDBG Grant: The Mayor allocates \$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.

Outreach: Chair Caldwell mentioned that CSTF outreach remains an ongoing issue. We will continue to address how best to communicate to the City Council and the public in general.

Community Solar: There is currently an opportunity with Solarize Albany which ends on December 31st. The incentive is a \$200 Amazon gift card. One has to go to the website, click on "projects" and then "community solar" to sign up. Jim asked how claimed savings of 10% is determined and Ben said it is done as a credit, similar to a discounted gift card.

Rayna recalled the success of the Solarize Saratoga campaign. In 2015 it was a "poster child" for helping businesses take advantage of solar on their rooftops and reducing their energy costs. Ben offered to look into the current savings. Rayna noted that this campaign was a lot for her and Tina to run during the summer via tabling at the Farmers Market on Saturdays. It was effective, but a lot for two people.

Jim reported back from a conference in Vienna. A top executive from National Grid gave a glowing presentation of their proactiveness and wanting customers to "join them on this journey." Jim went up to him after and said that he has been a customer for over 30 years and has never got any such message. It is important to hold leaders accountable on energy, conservation and climate.

Clean Energy: Laura mentioned NYSERDA's Clean Energy campaign. It involves a grant of \$5k for city's under 40k in population. The number of people needed to sign up to get the grant money is very small (i.e., 10). We should be touting their program and possibly Solarize Albany on the city's website. Part of our mission is to inform the Council and the public of energy efficient savings opportunities.

Stretch Code: Rayna commented that Climate Smart actions can be very daunting for small cities and that we don't have to reinvent the wheel on every subject. The Stretch Code is one such task that we need to push back on to better articulate the benefits.

Non-motorized and Motorized Mobility: There will be a City Council Meeting with a Public Hearing specifically on bike lanes on Union Ave. on Tuesday, January 17th. Ken and Ted of Complete Streets will be presenting the usage data from a traffic study. Deirdre noted that the backstretch workers definitely use Union Ave which prompted Heather to mention that the Council received a letter of support from the Race Track Chaplin. Heather offered to ask if he would come to the meeting as well.

West Side Project is in application phase. Truck Study is progressing as the city continues to work with Delta Grant consultants to identify other energy efficient, shovel ready projects.

Inflation Reduction Act: There may be an opportunity to communicate savings in the city's water and property tax bills. Ben suggested inserting a card in the bill. Heather said the city might be able to highlight a corner of the bill in a different color with a quick blurb or link.

Climate Realities: Laura said she was attending a meeting tonight. Next year's emphasis is on training how best to communicate the benefits afforded by the Inflation Reduction Act. She said they are looking at a three-tracked training; individual, business and local government.

The Home Show is on March 5 & 6. It is a great opportunity to share information and to ask service providers what they are doing. Laura also mentioned that Sustainable is looking into getting a computer room at Skidmore for people to calculate savings and help people to see what they are eligible for.

Code Training for Local Builders: Rayna recalled the successful lunch was put on for area builders. It was held at City Hall and they had presenters provide building code updates. It is a bit challenging to find interesting presenters, but she thinks she has someone and would like to work on hosting this again.

Methane Gas: Capturing and burning methane gas released at the landfill is a highly effective way to reduce emissions. Jim brought up the fact that he saw an RFP to O & M Services. Rayna asked Deirdre to find out more about the status of this effort.

Climate Smart Action Plans: There are many plans out there and Deirdre noted we should look at small city plans, especially Ithaca's. Like Ithaca, we are a college town. Like Burlington, VT, we are also a tourist town. However, we are also a historic town. A city in the country, with many natural resources amongst Victorian charm. One idea is to do a very targeted, prioritized and customized plan tailored to our unique city and historical state gem. Deirdre will continue to look into this idea.

Evening Meeting and Collaboration: We are hoping Tina will stay on the committee. Perhaps we can collaborate with the other city committees (Open Space, Complete Streets, Historical Preservation and Sustainable Saratoga) to look at synergies amongst these POSH orgs.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 18 at 9am.

Minutes were respectfully submitted by Deirdre Ladd & Michael Dutre