

Saugerties Conservation Advisory Commission

May 18, 2023 Zoom Video Conferencing

MINUTES

CLIMATE SMART TASK FORCE 5:00 pm Start

Present: Mary O'Donnell, Elizabeth Shafer, Mike Harkavy, Ken Goldberg, Mary McNamara, Leslie Surprenant, Carole Furman, Skip Arthur, Kathleen Gray, Mary Anne Wrolsen, Zach Horton

CCA Presentation by Joule CEO Jessica Stromback

Jessica indicated that the New York renewable pricing has gone up, the suggestion was for 50% New York renewable and 50% from national renewable sources.

Skip spoke to the confusion of the CCA new offering letter to the community since the default of Columbia. The order of products was misleading as the dirty energy got top billing. Jessica said that Joule was prohibited from changing the copy of the letter at all by the regulators.

Mike reiterated Skip's concerns. Jessica was concerned about mitigating the messaging. She asked that the CAC write an email to that effect.

Ken outlined the choices in the letter as he understood them: Central Hudson supply, CCA standard supply, which was described by Jessica as the same product as Central Hudson, the 50% renewable which is technically 100% renewable. Jessica said the public must be educated and perhaps ads could be taken out to that effect. The regulation says that Joule can only promote the New York renewable.

Mary followed up on the communication. There was a sentence indicating there is a premium for the 100% renewable. Jessica said the wording, terms and order of product was done by the PSC and could not be changed. She said that they had to hire additional customer service operators due to the confusion generated by the letter. She said the PSC was not focused on renewable. She is pushing for a law to make renewable a priority.

Carole asked why Joule couldn't communicate that the 50% product is actually 100% renewable. Jessica said they would try to push the regulators. Mary said the definition did not constitute an explanation. Jessica said she would rework the communications. She said it was a month long cycle to make changes.

Elizabeth asked how the community was expected to trust Joule after the Columbia fiasco. Jessica answered that the instability due in part to the war in Ukraine meant prices went up and Columbia couldn't meet their obligations. She said that Joule has tightened their contracts and only dealing with large publicly traded national suppliers.

Mary asked why Joule went with Columbia. Jessica wasn't involved in the bidding and vetting process last time.

Leslie asked who in the Department of Public Service to email and what points should be made. Jessica said that emails should outline the frustrations with the letter and communications. Jessica said she would get the right DPS contacts.

Mary asked why Joule was suggesting the 50% default. Jessica said it was a question of price.

Mike asked what the other towns' reaction was to the letter. Jessica said everyone hates the letter for a variety of reasons. He said another letter would undermine confidence in the program. Jessica said she didn't favor a second letter, but rather using social media and public forums.

Mary spoke to the logistics considering the deadline for response is June 9th.

Jessica closed asking that people sign a statement of support for new regulations.

Approval of April Minutes

Carole moved with Skip seconding. The motion passed.

CSC Actions Update

Mary indicated that the 50% default does not qualify for CSC points.

Mike said the resiliency component might already be covered given the town's study on the isolated risks of flooding. He has requested the information from the municipal government.

Elizabeth said that the heat pumps could be applied to the certification as could local solar. Although organic waste collection is an item, Mary McNamara said commercial haulers typically wouldn't handle composting materials.

Ken said he was unable to find the process for opening cooling centers. Zach said that the supervisor made the determination. Mary said there was an extra point available if the centers were open beyond business hours.

Kathleen spoke to Michelle Hinchey's representative at the library about Central Hudson's delivery charges. Said there was RDM refund available for users who used less energy.

Mary said that the application for recertification would not be approved piecemeal, but the application does not have to wait until 2025 for submission. The approval review period is seven weeks.

Ken asked how many points to achieve silver designation. Mary said 300.

Planning Board Report

Carole said the Villa would be having hearings over the next couple months. Traffic will be the number one concern. There is opposition to the Habitat for Humanity development. HITS has

deployed 4 new tiny houses in their RV lot. Kings Highway will be developed by a firm specializing in toy distribution.

Town Liaison Report

Zach said there are opposing petitions concerning the Villa project. There is no Winston Farm news. He is still waiting for data on the harvester. Pickleball courts will open soon in the Cantine complex.

Ulster County Environmental Management Council Report

Leslie summarized the April 26th meeting. There are 378 communities engaged in Climate Smart, with 118 certified.

Announcements

Elizabeth attended a webinar on natural resources inventory and said that Saugerties was mentioned in a positive light for our comprehensive plan.

Carole mentioned that Melissa Herzog was instrumental in the local resiliency resources.

Adjournment

Elizabeth moved to adjourn. Carole seconded and the motion passed.

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION 6:28 pm Start

Present: Mary O'Donnell, Elizabeth Shafer, Ken Goldberg, Mary McNamara, Leslie Surprenant, Carole Furman, Kathleen Gray, Mary Anne Wrolsen, Zach Horton

Approval of Minutes

Mary moved to approve the April minutes, Elizabeth seconded and the motion passed.

Announcements

Zach said that the board hoped to secure a new area along the creek to off load the milfoil. Mary said Leanne might help with that as regards to her position with the Conservancy.

Adjournment

Mary moved to adjourn with Carole as second. The motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Prepared by: Kevin Freeman, Secretary