

Saugerties Conservation Advisory Commission

November 16, 2023 Zoom Video Conferencing

MINUTES

CLIMATE SMART TASK FORCE 5:00 pm Start

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

Approval of October Minutes

Mary moved to accept, Elizabeth second. Minutes approved.

Inflation Reduction Act Report

Robert spoke on the IRA and Climate Reality Project. He said his materials were more specific to individuals rather than municipalities. The Act, passed in April 2022, mostly addressed climate change through tax credits. Examples for individuals include heat pump technology, solar, home insulation. Mary suggested the subject be a topic for public education. At the NY State level, transportation (28%) and buildings (32%) account for 60 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. Incentives include tax credits from the Fed and State for solar, Electric Vehicles and more. The roll out started with the Federal tax credits which can be taken out over a course of years. There was a question about income levels. Robert said rebates from the state will be enacted on a sliding scale in the future. Carole mentioned the NYSERDA program for weatherization available to those earning 60% of a localities' median income. Leslie asked about heat pump rebates. Robert said Central Hudson has a program depending on how many BTUs are involved. The heat pumps don't have the best incentives presently. Mike asked about information for municipalities. Robert said he is still looking into it.

Robert attended an event hosted by the Hudson Valley Regional Council. Three towns presented on meeting the PE9 action. Documentation of two public education programs and outreach adopted by the local government. The towns of Northeast, Shandaken and Poughkeepsie presented. Northeast had an Earth Day and demonstrated technologies. They also produced a climate smart survey. They sponsored a bulk trash day, a composting program in conjunction with a local farm. They also work with their local movie house to put on a screening of an environmental documentary. Poughkeepsie created climate smart flyers and gave presentations at a variety of places, including online workshops. They also sponsored repair cafes. Shandaken also did presentations, flyers and community outreach.

Mary asked what the committee might consider as PE9 actions. Skip suggested educating the public about the IRA and rebates available to them. He mentioned some of the negative experiences with geothermal and hoped that vendors might join the committee to make presentations on the newer technologies. Carole emphasized the weatherization aspect of conservation. Robert thought the energy audits done by NYSERDA were still free.

Mary thanked Robert for the information and suggested the CAC coordinate presentations to the public in the spring or summer.

EMC Report

Leslie said there was no October meeting but Ulster County has implemented a green purchasing policy with a 20 minute training on that and they offer that as a possible model for local communities.

There is a draft final report for the Reuse Innovation Center; feasibility study underway for sorting out things that are reusable or resalable and having a facility likely connected to the Resource Recovery Center that artisans and manufacturers could go and secure supplies.

Simon Skolnick has approached the Environmental Management Council and Ulster County in the city of Kingston with the possibility of hosting next year's annual New York State Association of Conservation Council's annual meeting and conference.

Flooding Resiliency Report

Mary mentioned a presentation by the Stevens Institute of Technology. They have set up a model whereby they can see in real time the water levels and they can forecast the flooding. They reported that over 90% success in predicting the floods in forecasting.

Leslie reported on the previous Flood Resiliency Network meeting in Albany. She said there were very few municipalities represented, mostly consultants and nonprofits. There was a small breakout group that was more suited to the DPW or Planning Board, but there was an interesting tour and conversation about flooding mitigation. Much of the examples of water reclamation weren't something that the CAC would engage in.

Town Liaison Report

Zach said that the Town Board had approved the budget. He reported that the Villa project brought by the Dominican Sisters of Spark Hill was on hold as the developers were in the process of negotiating with the adjacent Lasher House property.

Planning Board Report

The Planning Board wasn't meeting until the next week. Carole expected the Villa project to be discussed as well as an application by HITS, which has not been presented yet.

Mike questioned Zach about the water supply for the town and how it would be monitored and managed with the new developments. Zach did not have any specific answers, but noted it is being evaluated between the town and village.

Announcements

Mary announced that on December 5th, there would be a workshop about the Esopus Creek Stream Management Plan. Everyone agreed not to convene for a December meeting. Mary asked all members to consider reappointment. She will stay on the CAC, but will step down as Coordinator and Chair, probably around mid-March.

Kathleen said she attended an open space planning and funding webinar. Since the town has been talking about updating the national resources inventory and open space plan, she will be seeking funding for such a project. There's also an initiative in the State to conserve 30% of available

open land. She said that there was a suggestion that towns identify areas that they feel should be left open and preserved. She will write up the notes she took from the conference. Mary noted that, in the Comprehensive Plan, we say at least 50% or 51% of what's in the farm should be open space. Carole said that New Jersey preserved property after a storm and required all new building to be resilient. There was money available to do so. Leslie added that designation is exceptional and or unique environmental characteristics. Critical areas can encompass upland forests or any sort of important environment and it recognizes the importance of those areas for ecological services.

Adjournment

Mary moved with Elizabeth seconding. The motion passed.

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION 6:20 pm Start

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Approval of Minutes

Mary moved to approve the November minutes and Mike seconded. Approved.

Announcements

Leslie said that the pollinator meadow was happening and that she had ordered the seeds. Greg Chorvas and the Parks Department have marked out the footprint for the meadow. The ground breaking was scheduled for 11/20 or 11/21, depending on the weather. Greg had suggested a water feature that Leslie is considering. Six members of the Boys and Girls Club are interested in the seeding process scheduled for 11/28. There was discussion on press coverage.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Prepared by: Kevin Freeman, Secretary