

Saugerties Conservation Advisory Commission

September 16, 2021

I CLIMATE SMART TASK FORCE

Meeting start 5:00.

Present: Steve Wehr, Patti Kelly, Skip Arthur, Mike Harkavy, Mary O'Donnell, Elizabeth Shafer, Mary Ann Wrolson, Leslie Surprenant

Town of Saugerties Reps: Kathleen Gray, Vernon Benjamin, John Schoonmaker (joined at 6:00.)

Guests: Dianne Cardona (Common Energy), Thea Kopley (Power Market)

Approval of August 19, 2021 Task Force Minutes – approved.

Community Solarize – Q/A with guests / vendor reps from Solarize Ulster

Q. How does the Solarize program work in your company?

A. Thea Kopley (Power Market) – allows anyone in a community to select “green” energy in the same way as you receive electric energy now. Customer “subscribes” to the means to get energy (solar, in this case), but not from a specific solar array. Works as a credit system in which the amount of electricity used (KWH) cost in dollars is calculated and 90% of that cost is credited to the Solarize energy source. Energy rates are set by NYS Public Service Commission.

Households “subscribing” to the Solarize program receive 10% of the cost returned (acts as a discounted energy price.) Power Market bills customer. 10% discount on Central Hudson (CH) bill and applies credit first before first bill.

A. Dianne Cardona – credits applied through community solar cancels out part of Central Hudson bill. Solar depends on weather; there are seasonal fluctuations in output.

Q How does billing work?

A. Thea K. “Unified” billing – customers receive Common Energy bill, not C.H. bill and pay by direct debit or credit payment; no checks accepted.

Diana C. “Consolidated” billing - CH continues billing; some current customers receive both Power Market and CH bills. All statements are emailed; payments must be electronic – no check. Power Market is working toward single billing (“consolidated” billing) in which households receive CH bills showing energy usage and credits. At signup time for Saugerties, customers will be able to have consolidated billing under CH.

ACTION: Thea and Dianne will send statement samples to Mary O.

Q – Where are the solar farms?

A. Solarize Ulster has information on its website. We will provide links and customers will know what solar fields are available.

Q – Is there a contract customers would sign?

Thea K. – Yes, always a contract. Contract is online and downloadable. Need to sign up to see

contract.

ACTION: Thea will send copy of contract to Mary O.

Dianne C. – contract is last step – no access to document before enrollment; customer will be able to see contract and sign after enrollment.

Q. What does customer commit to in contract?

A. No long-term commitment.

Thea K.- Customer can cancel by giving notice (ideally 90 days); no time commitment required on contract.

Dianne C. Contract describes cancelation process; no cancelation fee or penalties.

Q Explain gift card award for households signing up for Solarize.

Dianne C. – Visa gift card sent 30 – 60 days after enrollment application

Thea K. – Same as described by Dianne.

Q. What do you do provide for outreach?

A. Thea K. – Varied materials depending on community; can provide what town / CAC needs.

Dianne C. – same – has a “Welcome” packet.

ACTION: Dianne will send copy of welcome packet to Mary.

Mary O. - Town Board passed resolution supporting Solarize Ulster / Community Solar.

ACTION: Launch event on Zoom – 10/14 @ 7:00 – with Thea K. and Dianne C.

Goal – 10 customers sign up for Community Solar.

Added topic to agenda: Sustainable Hudson Valley Initiatives (Mary email from Melissa Everett) – CAC lacks excess capacity for additional efforts. Steve W. added 10/17 – 24 Climate Solutions Week to Climate Smart Saugerties to help promote activities and events.

Town Board update re Climate – Governor signed new Executive Order allowing all meetings to be virtual.

Public hearing – Family of Woodstock and HITS – asking to amend zoning to allow larger solar array to offset their costs. Some concern about farmland use. Family of Woodstock has owned parcel for 20 years and not used it as farmland. Another public hearing will be held. Family of Woodstock will continue to allow access for people to walk to Valley Pond Farm pond.

Comments - Vernon B. – Public Service Commission rate setting negotiations are ending – Saugerties has commented.

Adjournment – 6:27 PM.

II. CAC REGULAR BUSINESS

Meeting Start: 6:28 PM.

Skip, Leslie, Mike H., Mary O, Elizabeth S, Kathleen G, Vernon B., John S., Mary Ann W.

Approval of August 19, 2021 Minutes – approved

Milfoil Harvesting in Esopus Creek - Little harvesting occurred this season. A map of harvest trips was developed from an onboard GPS. Most harvesting around beach; some upstream. Town is discussing acquiring a second harvester for upstream. Harvesters will not enter the Hudson R. due to potential to introduce more AIS. No funds are allocated. An executed written agreement between town and village for more equitable harvest effort is needed.

Planning Board Report – Carole emailed her report to CAC members.

Town Board Liaison Report – John S. - In addition to what was reported at Climate T.F. portion of meeting - Town Board will probably have “hybrid” meetings with both in-person and virtual participation, now that the sound quality issues have been addressed.

Budget Request – John S. – Town is working on its preliminary budget and is receiving new budget asks; suggests CAC request same funding as past years.

ACTION: Mary will request \$2500 through John to Board.

Announcements / Comments -

Leslie S. – NYS’s Styrofoam ban draft regulations are out for public comment – comment period ends November 22, 2021.

ACTION – Leslie send link to CAC members <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/120762.html>

ACTION: Leslie – locate and send info on deer Epizootic Hemorrhagic disease to CAC <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/123773.html>

Adjournment – 6:49 PM