

Conservation Advisory Commission Meeting

MINUTES

May 20, 2021 via Zoom

CLIMATE SMART SAUGERTIES TASK FORCE (TF)

Convened 4:30 PM; Chair Mary O'Donnell presided.

Present: Skip Arthur, Vernon Benjamin, Carole Furman, Mike Harkavy, Patti Kelly, Susan Murphy, Mary O'Donnell, Nicole Roskos, Skip Arthur, Leslie Surprenant, Steve Wehr, Mary Anne Wrolsen, Kayleigh Zalonga
Representing Town of Saugerties: Kathleen Gray, Leanne Thornton; Town Board Liaison John Schoonmaker
Guest: Europa McGovern – Ulster County

Approval of Minutes – deferred to end of meeting.

1. Presentation/Q & A. Solarize Ulster Community Solar by Europa McGovern

Community Solar (CS) - Solarize campaign is to assist solar developers in recruiting customers. New community solar customers receive billing credits – not actual electricity from company. Customers get ~ 10% discount on electric bill and new customers receive \$100 gift card for signing up. No cancellation fees. Developers donate \$100 to Ulster County's "Green New Deal" program.

Discussed how Community Choice Aggregate (CCA) differs from CS. CCA supplies electricity under municipal contract and CS supports developers with billing credits. Customer acquisition through Solarize Ulster campaign benefits developer and helps NYS meet its energy goals. If you are going to be in CCA, you can sign up for Community Solar now and would be switched to CCA. You can be resident in CCA and have C.S. at same time. Town implementing CCA but not CS.

Some TF members expressed concern about potential competition between CCA and CS; Europa assured TF that the programs are complementary. Europa can advise in developing CS campaigns for sign up to support Solarize Ulster – need to get 10 customers to be eligible for \$5000 NYSEERDA. T/Olive has scoping doc that will be reviewed by NYSEERDA. Developers are required to support Solarize Ulster campaign and are willing to help with publicity campaign and events.

2. Recommendation: Community Solar Saugerties/Solarize Ulster Partnership

TF discussed whether Town should engage in the Solarize Ulster campaign to support CS. CAC will recommend that the Town supports the campaign. Needs resolution, scoping document, and identification of partners for support and collaboration. Discussed timing of campaign. Mary O offered to complete scoping document.

TF discussed timing of campaign - if Town approves a resolution to implement the CCA information outreach at its June 16 meeting, the deadline for CCA opt out will be July 15. If Town decided to support Solarize Ulster, TF must be ready to roll out the Solarize Ulster promotion campaign. Town of Saugerties residents who join a CS before Town launches campaign cannot be counted toward the 10 signups needed. Solarize Ulster extended campaign period to end of August – and likely beyond. Will need volunteers to promote at farmers' markets and other events.

Clean Energy Community (CEC)

We have 3100 points and are now eligible to apply for a \$10K grant – need documentation of CCA resolution and agreement with provider. The Town’s adoption of the NY Stretch energy code is worth 1200 points toward applying for \$20K grant. NY Stretch is a model code for New York jurisdictions to use to meet their energy and climate goals by accelerating the savings obtained through their local building energy codes.

Steve Wehr made a presentation on purchasing electric vehicles (EV) to the Town Board on 5/19 and demonstrated cost savings over time. There is potential to use \$7500 DEC grant toward EV.

Fleet Inventory

Patti and Carole will give Kathleen the information they have gathered. The information is outdated and the Town does may not have level of detail needed for Climate Smart Community documentation.

Community Solar (CS) and Community Choice Aggregation (CCA)

Letters from Joule explaining CCA to Town of Saugerties residents should go out by July 15. Town signed agreement between town and contractor on CCA describing what will be offered to community. (Village recently signed agreement with Joule to administer CCA)

Climate Smart Community PE (Pledge Element) 3 - Fleet Inventory

Patti and Carole will give Kathleen info they have – outdated. Town does may not have level of detail needed for Climate Smart Community documentation.

Break Free from Plastics – bill is in Congress – not voted out of committee. Expect to be brought up again – should Town / CAC send letter of support – now or later when brought up again. Susan M. will draft letter to be considered next meeting.

Grant Opportunity– TF voted to send letter encouraging the Town to apply for Hudson R. Estuary grant for public access to river including access for people with disabilities and possible grant writing for interpretive signage at three parks on the Hudson River in the Town.

Town Board Liaison Report (moved from CAC portion of meeting to TF due to time)

Town received public comments with concerns about proposed 3-story building at Jeffery’s Court in area zoned for 1-story buildings. Plan is being revised and may propose 2-story structure. Fire Department concerns regarding need for ladder truck to assist in 3-story buildings.

Kings Hwy metals recycling business proposes to use double high metal containers to use as fencing and a riverfront cabin “glamping” and public restaurant are being proposed at another Town of Saugerties location.

Adjournment – 6:33 PM

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

MINUTES

Regular CAC Business 6:34 pm

Present – Members: Mary O’Donnell, Skip Arthur, Mike Harkavy, Carole Furman, Elizabeth Shafer, Leslie Surprenant, Vernon Benjamin, MaryAnn Wrolson,

Town of Saugerties representative Kathleen Gray, Town Board liaison John Schoonmaker

Approval of Minutes – April 21 minutes approved.

Ashokan Reservoir Releases – Vernon B drafted letter to DEC regarding releases after visiting various locations with advocate and film maker. Focus on community character and business impacts. CAC approved letter and recommended including mission and importance of DEC and calling for consideration of alternatives. Mary work with Vernon – will send for review / comments / approval. Advocates are considering Facebook messages to encourage public comments. Public comment period closes 6/16.

An Esopus / Ashokan working group has identified gaps in Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS.)
Town of Saugerties is only intervenor,

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Announcements – proposed hydropower project at Cantine dam. Leslie S. to follow up – track project.

Adjournment 6:58 PM.