

Climate Smart Communities Task Force
February 3, 2021 Minutes
via video teleconference

Present

Steve Powers CSC Chair, CAC Rep

Bruce Shenker CSC Coordinator, NLR rep To CC Env Management Council

Bob Gilson, CAC Rep

Adelia Moore

Peg Munves

Elizabeth Poreba

Sarah Steadman

Cathy Wilkerson

Josh Young

Marc Anthonisen advisor

Jill Henck Clean Energy Coordinator

David Farren, CAC Chair

Absent. Marsha Kessler,

Jenna Barbary-Glovsky CAC Rep

Steve Powers began the meeting at 7:04PM. After approval of the minutes, he announced that we will learn the status of our application for Bronze by Feb. 26. 8 items have been approved thus far.

The CSC has been invited to present a talk at the annual Columbia County Round Table to be held March 30. All are invited. Jill will send promotional materials.

Because we had to resubmit the scoping document for the Community Solar Program, it is unclear if the document will be approved by the planned February 16th launch of the Program. Though the Feb. 16 meeting could be framed as an informational session, attendees will want to sign up. Because the program will not be approved by NYSERDA unless the scoping document is approved first, it may be better to simply postpone the launch. Steve and Jill will continue to exert pressure for approval before the 16th.

Jill then listed the grants for which the town will gain qualification as it continues to complete actions listed on the spread sheet of the NYSERDA points program, which is mostly congruent with the CSC program. Because we have completed the minimum number of four action items, we are qualified to submit a request for a \$5000 grant, once the Town Board approves the submission. This money may be used for “anything energy related.”

Moreover, Jill said a few more actions on the NYSERDA program will get us up to the 3000 point threshold for additional grants. She recommended that we earn these points with a campaign; for example, in support of electric vehicles or clean heating.

In addition, we will be eligible for a \$5000 grant if 10 households sign up for Community Solar.

Marc gave an update on our path to Silver Certification, which will require as many as 180 points in addition to the the 120 points earned to achieve Bronze. These are: Community Green House Gas inventory, Interior Lighting Upgrades, Clean Energy Upgrades, Alternative Fuel Infrastructure, Riparian Buffers, Source water protection, Solarization Campaign, Climate Change Education & Engagement, and an Annual progress report, for which Marc plans to submit his final paper for his Cornell degree.

Much progress can be made on these, since Marc plans to deploy Cornell students who will, as part of their studies, do an overall survey of the town's environmental hazards and assets, with an emphasis on encouraging climate change education and engagement. Students who do this work are often available the following summer as interns and could be helpful in further actions.

Other possible actions include a Heat Emergency Plan, Flood mapping (necessitating contact with FEMA), a Climate Action Plan for Government Operations, a Renewable Energy Feasibility Study, and a Repair Café.

Adelia moved that the Task Force create a subcommittee to investigate a Repair Café. The motion passed unanimously. Adelia and Sarah agreed to be on the Subcommittee. Bruce and Jill said they would provide them with contact information about Repair Cafés already extant..

Jill reported that Columbia County CSC is eligible for a \$5000 grant and is looking into getting an intern to manage its progress in fulfilling Action Items.

Adelia reported that she has been researching shopping bags to be distributed by the Education and Outreach Subcommittee. Since the Town cannot provide money for them, a sponsor must be found, and Ampion has agreed. Bob has found support at the high school for a contest to design the bag. The Subcommittee will determine the parameters of the design.

Liz and Sarah reported that the Free Store rack continues to be emptied. Frequently, people have brought donations directly to the rack.

Marc reported that Moy has repaired 26 bikes with 5 to 10 more to come. There is a plan to have a launch in May, inviting people to come and get a bike. Sarah suggested that the Free Store join the launch and Marc agreed.

There followed a discussion of the question of setting a minimum number of meetings that a person must attend in order to maintain membership on the Task Force. Such a ruling would have to go through the Town Board and apply to all Committees. The issue is complicated by the fact that members of the Task Force were not selected, and are not serving for a determined period of time. Steve said he would discuss this further with Tistrya.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25.

The next meeting will be held via Zoom on March 3 at 7PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Poreba

Secretary