

## **Climate Smart Communities Task Force Meeting**

Minutes

July 6, 2021

New Lebanon Town Hall, 6:30 PM

Present: Marc Anthonisen, Kris Cottom, Bob Gilson, Deborah Gordon, Peg Munves, Steve Powers, Sarah Steadman, Cathy Wilkerson. Virtual Guest: Brian Buzby

Absent: Adelia Moore, Liz Poreba, Bruce Shenker, Josh Young

The meeting was called at 6:30 pm. Steve called for an approval of the minutes. They were approved as submitted.

### **Chair Update:** – Steve Powers:

- Our Bronze status sign has been posted in front of the building at the Town Hall. The other sign is on display at the CSC booth at the Farmer's Market
- The CSC taskforce has received a \$5,000 grant from NYSERDA. A second grant has been applied for. There was an issue with the application, and it has to be re-submitted.
- We have gotten the minimum number of sign ups for the Community Solar program. We have been trying to get more signups, with some success, but it is slow going.
- The battery recycling program is going well. We have two full boxes of batteries to be sent for recycling.
- Steve is working on an electronics recycling day for the town. We are waiting for a date.
- We are still waiting for the installation of an electric pole and hookup for the electric vehicle charging station. The CSC will take over billing and filing a quarterly report.
- The Community Greenhouse Gas report (GHG) has been published. Emissions have declined from 2010. New Lebanon's automobile emissions (55%) are higher than normal for a town of our size; and agricultural emissions are 14% higher than normal. Our population is declining, but electrical usage is increasing – perhaps because of people working from home?
- The CSC annual report that Marc did is on the Town website.
- Comprehensive Plan: From the CSC side, the program has made it so strict it would be difficult to get points but we are close to meeting the requirements if the Comp Plan rewrite committee accepts our amendments. There are 5 required items including "Fostering Equity." This item is difficult to promote in rural communities; and would require significant changes to the zoning laws. What does it mean to encourage "smart growth?" There is no Hazard Mitigation Plan. Since we have the report from Jesse and Waqar, we should recommend that it would be integrated into the plan.

**Community Choice Aggregation:** Brian Buzby of Ampion gave a presentation on the Community Choice Aggregation Opt out variation. Ampion's proposal is to provide Community Solar for the entire town that would guarantee the lowest electrical prices available. Ampion is currently talking with the State to try to get this program approved. Once approved by the State, a local law would have to be passed to institute the program. Billing would be through NYSEG. People not interested in receiving the discount would have to opt out. There could be as much as a \$50,000 incentive for New Lebanon to institute the program. A motion was made: "The CSC approves the exploration of a CDG (Community Solar) Opt Out program by Ampion Renewable Energy for the Town of New Lebanon." The motion was approved.

**Trees for Tribes:** Peg Munves reported that the the project in Shatford Park is going well. There is a group of volunteers that are watering and mulching. Local resistance seems to have diminished. Cassidy Lancelin, a local landscaper has been helping out.

**Social Media:** Forty of our reusable bags promoting our Community Solar partnership with Ampion have been placed with Josh at the Farmer's Market. We need to keep reaching out to friends to promote Community Solar. We also need to be more strategic about Facebook posts.

**Repair Café:** Sarah Steadman proposed October 23 as the date for the first Repair Café. From 10 – 4:00 at the LVPA. The event will be promoted at Music in the Park this summer. A vote was taken and the date and venue was unanimously approved. Steve will propose to the board for approval on July 13.

**Bike Repair:** Marc reported that the bike program has placed 52 bikes in the past year: 17 more are ready to be placed, and an additional 20 bikes have been repaired for owners.

**County CSC:** Steve, Bruce and Tistrya are serving on the county CSC. David Newman is chair. Marc has been advising. There are now 18 members of the committee. They have an intern from Cornell for the summer to help them on the road to Bronze.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm. The next meeting will be on August 4 at 6:30pm in Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted: Robert Gilson