

Climate Smart Communities Task Force Meeting
March 2, 2022 Via Zoom

Present: Kristine Cottom, Deborah Gordon, Adelia Moore, Peg Munves, Frieda Pearce, Liz Poreba, Steve Powers, Bruce Shenker, Cathy Wilkerson

Advisor: Marc Anthonisen

Absent: Bob Gilson, Sarah Steadman, Josh Young

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

February 2 minutes approved

Tara Donadio of the CDRPC presentation;

Tara described the Heat Smart Capital Region, which is made up of 8 counties. Its Heat Smart goal is “strategic electrification” by targeting the 75% of the residents’ home energy use which goes to heating and cooling. Because natural gas is not available in this region, heat pumps are an economical alternative to fossil fuels for heating and cooling. She described the types of heat pumps and the rebates and other incentives available.

The Heat Smart campaign leads residents through a process beginning with an energy audit, provided free, followed by efficiency improvements, then an estimate, then installation.

Members pointed out how difficult it is to get busy installers to come do energy audits.

Tara will be conducting informational sessions at the library as we begin the Heat Smart campaign.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s latest document:

Marc briefly described this latest UN document, which consolidates the findings of climate scientists from around the globe. The basic take-away is that the impacts of climate change are more negative and widespread than anticipated and call for transformational rather than gradual changes. The US is the country most vulnerable to misinformation.

He noted how the IPCC report paralleled our own recent vulnerability report written by Cornell students.

Chair Update – Steve

The **heat pump** in the Town Garage is up and running. Its \$8530 cost was funded from the CSC grants and will garner 9 points toward Silver certification.

The **Climate Smart Resiliency Planning** project with the Cornell Cooperative Extension has started.

Community Solar -Because residents who sign up for Ampion Community Solar may now have to wait one year to join, Steve proposed that New Lebanon residents now sign up

with Columbia County's Community Solar program. The town would get \$50 for each resident who signed up.

MOTION: The Taskforce asks the permission of the Town Board to promote and sign up residents for the Columbia County Community Solar program. Passed.

Steve pointed out that the town will be receiving American Rescue Plan Act funds and suggested that they be used for solar panels on the Town Hall. Deb suggested that the funds would be better used for writing grants to get yet more money for more solar panels.

MOTION: The Taskforce suggests to the Town Board that ARPA funds be used to help finance solar panels on the Town Hall. Passed with one abstention.

Steve briefly described cryptocurrency mining, which if continuing unchecked, will make it impossible for the state to reach its climate goals.

MOTION: The Taskforce suggests that the Town Board support current legislation in Albany (S6486) (A7389) calling for a moratorium on cryptocurrency mining until a study of its effects is completed. Passed.

Battery recycling program boxes remain in 6 locations; 300 lbs recycled

EV Charging station is up and running. Bruce, who is in charge of the quarterly paperwork for the state, will find out how many drivers have used it.

The Taskforce will soon learn from the Town Board what their tasks are in relation to the **Comprehensive Plan**.

Some discussion ensued about the proposed **Earth Day event on April 23**. Cathy said she would contact Bob, who seemed to have some ideas about it, and arrange a Zoom conference to begin planning for it.

Marc has completed this year's **energy benchmarking for government buildings**. We now have data from 2016-2021. This will provide points with CEC, which provides grant money.

The County's **Hazard Mitigation Plan** will begin this spring and New Lebanon will participate.

NY DHSES/FEMA grants call for benefit/cost analyses which will be difficult to provide. Solar powered generators could be a possible topic.

County waste management plan:

Marc and Cathy had read this document. Cathy pointed out that it had very little data, but apparently a county-wide survey is being planned. Marc said we need to find out how to engage with this plan, which is meant to be a guide for the next 10 years.

Race Track:

Marc, using data from Nascar, determined that the Lebanon Valley Speedway is responsible for about 1 to 3% of the town's greenhouse gas emissions.

Cornell projects:

Three Cornell student projects are under Steve & Marc's auspices this term: a green jobs curriculum, a climate communications initiative, and a study of the LVPA's water tank options.

Coffee ground collection:

Liz asked if anyone were available to take up her twice-a-week collections for the three weeks she will be gone. Since no one volunteered, Cathy said she would do it.

Water update:

Peg reported that the DEC is going to retest some wells. The CAC has a water subcommittee that will get together in an informational campaign when there is more information available.

Repair café:

Adelia said that the pop-up café held at the Farmers' Market last Saturday was successful, with three repairers. The *Registar Star* has published an article about the project. Another café is planned for the end of March, and maybe for the last Saturday of every month.

Climate Carnival, July 16

Bruce said the website for the event will be up soon.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 6, in person at the Town Hall

Respectfully submitted: Elizabeth Poreba