



**Climate Smart
Communities**
Certified Bronze



Town of Poughkeepsie Climate Smart Communities Task Force
February 1, 2024 at 7 pm on Zoom
Meeting ID: 839 4056 3813

Attendees:

Susan Karnes Hecht, Chair
Barbara Laird, Ward 2, Board liaison
Joan Freeman, Member
Thomas Lynch, Member
Feza Oktay, Member
Mark Murray, Member
Ann Shershin, Ward 6, Board

Changes in CSTF roster: Welcome to new members Barbara Laird (Board liaison) and Mark Murray (Ward 2). Thanks expressed to Stanley Merritt, who has decided to leave the CSTF. Re- and new appointments were done at a recent Board meeting, but there were some errors. This will be corrected by an updated resolution at the 2/7 Board meeting. Ann Shershin will continue to support the CSTF while taking on new committee assignments.

We discussed changes in the Town's approach to climate issues going forward with the new leadership. There is enormous support and interest from the Board. Susan is concerned about setting appropriate expectations for volunteers as work ramps up. There is particular interest in ramping up grant writing capacity.

Update on Community Campaign planning:

- Clean Heating/Cooling, EV: Feza and Mark, along with Richard Levine, are focused thus far on the Heat Pump campaign. There's value in introducing EV information as well as long as we are going out in public, but there is more available to do on HPs right now. There will be a flyer at the Repair Cafe on 2/10. Faith Laudano from CCEDC will be there to help promote campaigns and electrification. We don't need full partner and event commitments to do scoping documents, but they hope to have a draft shortly and will continue to work with Liz Sun at HVRC on this project. We're going to need more volunteers going forward to cover events. Vendors included on any lists will be NYSERDA approved. We discussed approaches to tracking sign-ups. Other towns have used building dept. and electric permits to track HP installations. Ann will assist in finding out if we can access this information.

- Community Solar: Susan reached out to all providers for the Town and met with three representatives. There is typically a sales pitch and desire to be an exclusive provider for the Town. Susan is not sure if this is appropriate, sees it as a Board decision and is pursuing the topic with Supervisor Edwards. One provider, Power Market, is collaborating with Mid-Hudson Energy Transition (<https://www.mid-hudson.energy>), a non-profit dedicated to community

development of clean energy. They are interested in a campaign in the identified disadvantaged community areas which overlap the Town. Power Market is also awaiting regulatory approval to serve as a CCA administrator, initially for Kingston. Susan feels that this provider, for these reasons, should have an opportunity to share more information with the CSTF and elected leadership and will pursue this.

Update on LGO Climate Action Plan: Susan and Barbara met with Supervisor Edwards, Mike Welti (Municipal Director) and Kristen Taylor (Planner, CSTF staff liaison) on 1/30/24 to discuss setting goals for the government operations CAP. A final document is needed by April/May. We will have the assistance of a Vassar College intern, Leo Valenti, who will be guided by our cohort leaders at HVRC and will also be working on the City of Poughkeepsie CAP. Priority goals, based on our LGO GHG inventory, will be related to:

- Vehicle fleet: development of a fleet efficiency/green fleet policy, protocol for maintaining fleet inventory, and related actions. Looking at sample policies from other towns.
- Water/wastewater operations: conversion of power resources.
- Goals related to buildings/facilities: with initial priority placed on energy audits as a logical starting point to plan most effectively. Looking into resources for audit costs.
- Interest in electrification of highway and parks dept lawn equipment.

CAP Adapt cohort: will launch 2/8. Attendees: Susan, Barbara, Ann, Lisa Kaul (Ward 6 resident and District 6 DC Legislator). Staff possible but not definite.

Review of Community GHG Inventory Report draft: The draft was provided to members prior to the meeting. Tom had commented via email about the accuracy of the per-person annual emissions figure, which seems low compared to NYS and national averages that he obtained. This question was forwarded to Melanie Patapis at HVRC, Community Cohort leader. She validated the inquiry and agreed that the numbers do not require spot-on accuracy as long as the same methodology is used for later comparisons. She added that this snapshot of emissions is generated as part of a regional inventory first, and that the most crucial aspect is knowing where to start/focus for planning. Melanie also felt that it makes sense for us to have lower per capita emissions compared to State averages, since the latter includes NYC, Long Island and Westchester which get their electricity from a dirtier grid than the rest of the State. She added that NYS is also much greener than the rest of the US, making a comparison to the national average more difficult.

Feza suggested that, for clarity and accessibility, we could review the language used to describe what is reflected in the various sectors, which may sound government-oriented rather than residential/household. Examples of what is included in the categories might be helpful. We discussed who the audience might be for this more detailed section of the report and whether or not such changes would be of value. For example, could “transportation” be broken down to explain that private as well as commercial or fleet vehicles are included? A related point came up: should the Town revisit the concept of a single garbage hauler to reduce emissions resulting from multiple haulers in the same locations? We discussed the opportunity to delve further into this aspect when developing the associated plan. The Community CAP cohort will begin on 2/15.

Note concerning Clean Energy Communities: Susan spoke recently with Liz Sun at HVRC. Since Liz met with the CSTF in fall 2023, CEC has again tweaked the grant tiers. Because new community designation will become easier, communities that were previously designated have the opportunity to be “grandfathered” which means the availability of an additional

\$10,000. In order to qualify we need to submit one additional simple action. Liz looked through our NYSERDA submissions and discovered that, when we received CEC credit for LED street light conversion, only the cobra head lights were counted. Since we also converted decorative lights, which CEC counts separately, we can resubmit the same documentation for this second action. Susan will pursue.

Save the date:

- Repair Cafe - Saturday, 2/10/24 (snow date 2/11)
- Town Board Workshop Meeting - Wednesday 2/14/24 (CSTF and CAC)

Notes recorded by Susan Karnes Hecht