

**Town of Poughkeepsie
Climate Smart Communities Task Force**



May 6, 2021 at 7:00 pm

The meeting occurred at the following Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/91995613444?pwd=d1dacndyNzI0VEF3ZXlicFJkb1JCQT09>

Task Force members present:

Susan Karnes Hecht, Chair

Joan Freeman

Richard Levine

Ann Shershin

Katherine Espinosa

Stanley Merritt

Updates on actions in progress: Susan updated our initial submission spreadsheet to highlight actions to be completed or revised and those that would provide the third needed priority action (of which there are several). Currently we have 108 points overall, 2 of 2 mandatory actions, and 2 of 3 priority actions. The next submission date, and the final one for 2021, is 7/2/21. There has been progress in that the major error on the Climate Vulnerability Assessment action was corrected, giving us the 16 expected points for the correct action. Our focus in the short term needs to be on the resubmission deadline, and the goal of this meeting is to come away with a “punch list” to accomplish this.

- **Solar for All Campaign:** Danielle Salisbury reported an absence of signups; various publicity outlets have been used (town email, press release; Climate Smart Facebook page; Danielle is reaching out to town apartment complex managers; Susan is working through town congregations via the DC Interfaith Council and through the library; Katherine will communicate with food pantry at DCC; Ann will communicate with food pantry at Holy Trinity; we will target the Farmers’ Market in June; Ann will also prompt our Town Board members (to whom Susan has already written) for support with constituents. A soft copy of the flyer will be shared with all task force members immediately following the meeting.
- **Clean Energy Communities/Unified Solar Permit:** Since a formal resolution is not required to pursue CEC designation, Ann will focus on bringing this permit forward for adoption by the Board, which also counts towards Climate Smart.
- **NRI/Open Space Plan:** the next public workshop will occur in June. We will not be able to obtain a Board adoption in time for the submission. However, Susan determined that we can receive 8 (of 10) points for this action without formal adoption. She conferred with the NRI steering committee, provided this update and the details of the action criteria, and at their meeting early next week they will discuss pulling the NRI together in time. Susan had discussed this concern

previously with the consultant, MJ Engineering, and they had indicated ability and willingness to fulfill this need at the midpoint of the NRI/Open Space Plan project timeline.

- Fleet Inventory: the inventory is currently a spreadsheet, and Richard is concerned that this is a clumsy format. He would like to find a better tool that would more readily update overall impact on emissions as vehicles change. He looked at the ICLEI tool (which is what we expect to be used in CAPI), and it does have a fleet inventory as part of the government emissions. He will look at what documentation other communities have submitted who have had this action approved. Meanwhile, Richard and Kristen have been working with the Highway Dept. to complete that section of the inventory which is needed for resubmission. As noted in the action feedback, it would also be helpful to establish a written policy for how the inventory will be used and updated, and to submit this as well.
- Recycling bins: we need to request that the Town Supervisor issue a memorandum or executive order in order to fulfill this action. Susan/Ann will follow up.
- Draft comprehensive plan: Kristen Taylor reported earlier today as follows: The comp plan review committee has completed their chapter by chapter review of the draft document and provided comments to the consultant team along the way—this was completed at our 4/28 meeting. The consultant team is taking the comments and reworking the draft document. We anticipate sharing the draft with the public by 5/28 and hosting a public hearing/meeting via zoom on 6/9. Members of the public will have an opportunity to learn about the draft plan update and provide comments through 6/18, meaning the draft will likely make its way to the Town Board in July for their review. Susan reviewed the criteria for this action and it appears that the formal adoption is required; therefore a low probability that we'll have it in time for resubmission.
- Website: the new Town website has been repeatedly delayed but is expected to launch within days. Susan was given access and training and will be able to accomplish the needed updates to our page to qualify for this action.
- Cornell Partner Project: the Climate Smart Communities Course students, working with the Cooperative Extension, will develop a template for PE9, Climate Change Education/Engagement Plan that can be used to complete the action. We are signed up to be a target community.
- Climate-Adaptive Design: the Town was invited to apply for Cornell University's Climate-Adaptive Design program. The Board authorized a letter of interest and letters of support to be submitted. This project is being managed via the CAC. The CAC Chair, Pam Kingsley, and Susan on behalf of provided letters on behalf of these groups. This is a competitive application and we may or may not be selected. The project would take place during the fall semester 2021 semester and center on the New Hamburg waterfront, where flooding is already

impacting both residential and business properties.

Update on planning for charging station education: we discussed the need to move forward with planning an event for business owners particularly in light of the federal and state push to add infrastructure (“now is the time” was a suggested tagline). Following resubmission, this should be our next focus with a summer or fall event. This would lend itself well to Zoom. We already have extensive lists of existing charger locations and business types that should be approached. We will develop a script for reaching out to the former, first, to ask for their participation.

Tom Lynch was unable to join us tonight but reported that he contacted the chair of the Marist Campus Sustainability Committee. He learned that Marist has talked about installing charging stations, but because of financial concerns caused by the pandemic have held off so far from doing so.

Update on county composting discussion: Tom also learned the Marist Dining Hall used to collect food waste and have it hauled away by a commercial composter. They stopped this practice when they calculated that they were generating more greenhouse gases with the trucking than they were saving by composting. They now run all of the food waste through a biodigester before discharging the effluent into the sewage system. Tom also checked with Marc Pfeiffer from the Town Highway Department regarding the handling of the autumn leaves they collect. They used to compost the leaves and make them available to residents, but someone got hurt several years ago and sued the town. The Town Board as a result stopped making the compost available to residents. The Highway and Parks Departments use some of the compost for local projects. The rest of the leaves and yard waste goes to a commercial composter, Duffy Leighton in Stanford, who processes the material and sells it commercially.

Minutes recorded by Susan Karnes Hecht

Next meeting: June 3, 2021 at 7:00 pm