



**Climate Smart  
Communities**  
Certified Bronze



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

**August 3, 2023 at 7 pm on Zoom**

The meeting took place on Zoom at the following link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85918232519?pwd=QkFoN0EwbXJzVnZLTIUzNGxHYIN0Zz09>

Task Force members present:

Susan Karnes Hecht, Chair  
Ann Shershin, Town Board Representative  
Richard Levine  
Feza Oktay  
Stanley Merritt

Guests:

Peggy Kurtz, Community Coordinator/Joule Community Power  
Lisa Kaul, Repair Cafe organizer/Town resident

Presentation by Peggy Kurtz - Community Choice Aggregation (CCA)

Peggy had reached out to Susan along with Supervisor Baisley to discuss CCA. Supervisor Baisley has not participated in the ensuing correspondence but has been kept copied in so should be aware of tonight's presentation. Prior to this meeting Susan discussed with Peggy that the Town Board had seen two prior presentations on CCA but declined to move forward. Susan invited her to start with the CSTF and bring us up to date on the increased track record of the recent aggregations. In addition to working with Joule, Peggy co-chairs the CSC task force in her own town, is the leader of the Rockland Sierra Club, and is one of the leaders of the Rockland Water Coalition. She stressed that CCA is one of the most powerful actions that communities can take in terms of climate impact as well as credits for CSC and CEC that can in turn result in more funding. She also emphasized potential cost savings and strong consumer protection. The community can make its own choice, while the current default to Central Hudson energy resources is the choice that the town government has left in place by not exploring this opportunity.

Peggy's PowerPoint presentation is available to CSTF members in Google Drive (Susan will provide link).

Questions from those present:

1 - *What was the reason for prior declination by board?*

The opt-out format was a sticking point for some board members. We discussed that the retail

market is opt-in, and that previously the Town used an ESCO and got burned financially which makes our Board hesitant, even though ESCOs and CCA are completely different. The opt-out model is how CCA's are structured by the government, they all work this way by design.

*2 - Is there a place to see the NYS plan to generate needed power to reach the 2030 goal?*

Look at Climate Action Plan that followed CLCPA to implement, look at NY ISO.

Richard found the following site:

<https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/About/Publications/Energy-Analysis-Reports-and-Studies/Electric-Power-Transmission-and-Distribution-Reports/Electric-Power-Transmission-and-Distribution-Reports---Archive/New-York-Power-Grid-Study/Story-of-Our-Grid>

*3 - What about Community Solar?*

Community Solar helps to support development of new renewable energy projects, smaller and local than what may be involved in CCA purchase agreements. Compatible with CCA. Community Solar will also be offered through Joule - separate source of points for CSC, CEC and we can get more information on this aspect.

Resources used for CCA contracts are primarily larger hydropower and wind, not local.

*4 - What municipalities will be in the next aggregation?*

New communities, existing Hudson Valley Community Power program has a large number of towns.

*5 - There was a problem with a previous supplier with an existing CCA?*

Yes. Everyone still came out ahead, almost all communities decided to re-enroll.

*6 - Is there a threshold at which individual opt-outs preclude a CCA?*

No, these are a known, predictable ratio and are built into the proposals.

*7 - What is the rationale for separate CCA groups vs. one huge group?*

The supplier commits to the number of customers and rate, energy is pre-purchased, so a new set of communities has to negotiate its own new contract. It might perhaps be feasible to look at aligning contract periods to create a larger aggregation as this movement proceeds.

*8 - What organization besides Joule could do this in Poughkeepsie?*

There's currently only one other program administrator authorized by the Public Service Commission in our region, it doesn't specialize in renewables though as does Joule, which has beaten it on price.

*9 - What have been some of the greatest challenges in specific towns and how were these addressed?*

Input from local constituents has been key. Peggy suggested considering an online petition asking for the town to revisit exploring CCA. Reminder: passing the required resolution simply allows the discussion and is non-binding. Doing the right thing about climate change, good governance, also focus on the economic driver and municipal choice. Look at peers - the towns around us succeeding with this.

### Project updates

- CAPI Dutchess: Kristen Taylor has just completed the actual inventory work - a massive task on which she has done an incredible job! Susan is now picking up with the writing of the inventory report (a template is provided, and CAPI is also providing intern

support). At the next CAPI cohort meeting, we will present our work (each community in the cohort is taking a turn). Then moving into the Climate Action Plan phase.

- Community GHG Inventory (new): We were invited to participate in a separate cohort doing a community inventory (CAPI is strictly Government Operations GHG Emissions). Compared to CAPI, a very limited project (4 months, 4 meetings, all on Zoom). Most of the work has been done for us already, as the HV Regional Council has already updated the regional inventory and will provide each town's info, along with an inventory report template - all of this will meet CSC requirements for additional action/points. This project will continue in 2024 with the cohort developing community climate action plans. Susan enrolled us and obtained a letter of commitment, with Ann's assistance, from Supervisor Baisley. She has asked Joan Freeman to participate in this cohort. Begins late September, finishes in December.
- Solar array: the Board passed the resolution last week authorizing the Supervisor to sign the contract with SunCommon. No installation date yet. Susan updated the NYSERDA rep and is making sure that any additional documentation for NYSERDA is managed.
- Charger installation: the Board also passed the resolution to authorize the contract to install the chargers at town hall. Reminder: this is being done with a prior grant but arrangements for the electric service were needed. Central Hudson assisted in securing funding for this aspect so that the work can proceed.
- Green Business Bureau initiative: Feza requested additional information from our liaison, Maria Genovesi, regarding characteristics of regional businesses that are joining GBB. We do not yet have the kind of detail on this that will allow us to identify the most likely businesses to target.
- Repair Cafe: Lisa updated us, it will be on Saturday 9/9/23 at Vassar Barn from 1:30 - 5:30. Still seeking coaches, overlaps with Poughkeepsie Open Studios which is having some impact on coach availability. The library is launching a tool library and will hopefully be there with info. The County hopes to provide a textile recycling bin and also offered to help with publicity.
- Arlington Street Fair 9/16 - Susan and Richard unavailable due to holiday conflict. Susan will email everyone regarding this and also check in with CAC to see if we can again arrange a shared table.
- Ann asked if Tomfillery might be able to offer the take out containers, the owner is in favor of the concept, but as Feza pointed out we still have all of the other issues of ordering, restaurants, health dept, etc. Feza found info on a Martha's Vineyard membership fee based program and will see what else he can find out.

Next meeting: Thursday, September 7, 2023 at 7 pm on Zoom

Minutes recorded by Susan Karnes Hecht