

Dutchess County Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Task Force

November 16, 2020 - 5:30-7:00pm

Virtual Zoom Meeting

MINUTES

Task Force Members Present: Brad Barclay (DC Dept. of Planning & Development) (Co-coordinator), Steve MacAvery (Dutchess County Environmental Management Council) (Co-coordinator), Gary Bassett (Village of Rhinebeck), Audrey Friedrichsen (Scenic Hudson), Melissa Everett (Sustainable Hudson Valley), Mark Figliozi (Town of Pleasant Valley), Jeff Irish (Sun Common), Carolyn Klocker (Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County), Christopher Kroner (MASS Design Group // Hudson Valley Design Lab), Europa McGovern (Hudson Valley Regional Council), and Allan Page (A. Page & Associates, LLC), and Alan Surman (Dutchess County Legislature), and Brian Scoralick (DC Soil and Water Conservation District).

Other Members Not Present: Bridgette Anderson (Dutchess Community College) and Michael Lauchaire (Central Hudson Gas & Electric).

Welcome and Self-Introductions

Brad Barclay (DC Dept. of Planning & Development) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members of the Task Force introduced themselves.

Review and Adoption of Draft Minutes from the January 29, 2020 Task Force Meeting

The meeting minutes were reviewed and accepted by the committee.

CAPI Update

Brad has been working with Carla Castillo (Hudson Valley Regional Council) and DEC staff to develop a contract and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County and nine other municipalities working on this project. The intent is for the MOU to be signed by all parties in December 2020 and for official work to begin on the CAPI in January 2021.

Updates on Projects

- **Electric Vehicle Study by County and Central Hudson:** Brad explained that in March 2020 a study was conducted by Dutchess County and Central Hudson, tracking 40 County sedans and SUVs for 6 months, including patterns of usage, length and frequency of trips, and speed and braking tendencies. The aim was to see if these vehicles could be adapted to become alternative vehicles and whether the County would save money in doing so. The study looked at the projected total cost of operating (TCO) for a ten-year service life. It was determined that replacing 35 (out of the 40) vehicles with plug-in hybrids would be feasible and a cost-savings for the County (median savings of this change is \$11,707). The County did not do a vehicle bond in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic; the next vehicle bond is planned for the fall of 2021 so there is plenty of time for these alternative vehicles to be considered. The study only recommended the use of hybrid vehicles; more information is needed in determining the potential use of solely electric vehicles. Further study can be done on this effort through the CSC Transportation Efficiencies Committee; Brad will provide the committee more information on this subject.
- **Local Municipalities' CSC Certifications/Local Champions Achievements:** Dutchess County and the Town of Red Hook both achieved bronze-level certification in September 2019. Since then, the Village of Rhinebeck achieved bronze-level certification in March 2020. In September 2020, the City

of Beacon achieved silver-level certification, the first in Dutchess County to achieve this level, and the Town of Dover achieved bronze-level certification. Congratulations to all these communities!! In addition, the following Dutchess County municipalities have registered for the NYS Climate Smart Communities program and have begun their path to certification: the City of Poughkeepsie, the Villages of Millerton, Red Hook, Tivoli and Wappingers Falls, and the Towns of Amenia, Hyde Park, LaGrange, North East, Pine Plains, Pleasant Valley, Poughkeepsie, Union Vale, Clinton, Rhinebeck, and Wappinger. For the communities just getting started with this program, there is a new funding opportunity being offered by the New World Foundation -- [Lifeboats HV](#) is a pilot program aimed at helping Hudson Valley communities become more climate-smart. The project, known as "Local Champions," will award \$8,000 grants to six communities to support the hiring of "Climate Smart Coordinators." These individuals will participate in a six-month program of training and technical assistance as they help to shepherd their communities through the NY State Climate Smart Communities bronze certification process. The full press release for this funding opportunity is included on the [DC Dept. of Planning and Development webpage for the Climate Smart Communities Program](#). Applications are due December 14th. Gary Bassett (Village of Rhinebeck) noted that the Village of Rhinebeck received this grant and said that it was pivotal in helping the Village achieve their climate-smart goals.

- **Test Solar Array at Dutchess County Airport:** On September 3, 2020, Tesla "flipped the switch" on a new 2.4MW solar array located at the Hudson Valley Regional Airport. The array is located outside the safety zone for the main runway, north of Route 376, on Airport property. The facility was developed through a purchase power agreement between Dutchess County and Tesla. This project's beginnings were with a NYSEDA grant given to Solar City, and this group partnered with Dutchess County as a host site. The current solar array, whose production is rated at 2,173 kwh, will offset 13%-15% of the electricity used by County facilities. This project dates back to remote net-metering standards, which helps to make the margins more desirable for the County.
- **NYSEDA 20-25 MW Site Search and Review Changes:** Brad explained that NYS has made some changes to its statutes regarding industrial solar arrays. The adoption of Article 6 Section 94C (Major Renewable Energy Development Program) will replace Article 10, the previous guidance for these systems. This change seeks to encourage new industry-scale solar development. For projects greater than 20-25MW, a State-wide approval process will be utilized, instead of local controls. These projects will be granted a default timeframe, include some funding for intervenors, and may allow a storage component (but not standalone batteries). Also, host community benefits are possible with formal proceeding (impact mitigation) and pre-approval is possible on brownfields. Actively, NYSEDA is doing a search for sites of greater than 65 acres for industrial-scale renewable projects. The question for this group, and for the County, is whether these types of facilities are appropriate in certain places in Dutchess County. Audrey Friedrichsen (Scenic Hudson) further explained that Scenic Hudson has been working on this issue and permitting process quite a bit. Audrey noted that Scenic Hudson has developed a GIS-based [Solar Mapping tool](#) for the siting of solar projects – map layers include hosting capacity and transmission line layers, among many others.
- **Dutchess County Single-use Plastic Pollution Prevention Campaign ([Dutchess S.U.P.P.P.](#)):** Michelle Gluck (CCEDC) explained that in September 2019 the County began a waste reduction education campaign ([PE5 CSC Action](#)). The campaign was spearheaded by Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County (CCEDC), in partnership with the Dutchess County Environmental Management Council, Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development Division of Solid Waste Management, and additional Steering Committee members. The campaign focused on educational efforts for Conservation Advisory Committees and local food service establishment businesses, hoping to raise awareness about pollution issues and encouraging the sharing of resources, tools,

and strategies for reduction and elimination of single-use plastics. The campaign was able to successfully pivot this past spring to remote educational methods, including an Earth Day Facebook Live session and a virtual focus group for local businesses. As there is a clear linkage between single-use plastic material production and climate change impacts, the campaign aligns with the County's NYS Climate Smart Communities certification efforts and meets criteria for PE5 Waste Reduction Education Campaign. Michelle added that the NYS Bag Waste Reduction Law went into effect in October 2020; more information can be found [here](#).

- **Regional Climate Action/Sustainability Plan:** Brad noted that Melissa Everett (Sustainable Hudson Valley) has been spearheading work on this plan. He and Melissa have been discussing how the task force can be influential and helpful in the development and rollout of the plan. Melissa noted that this plan is focused on the ways in which various regional entities can learn from each other and work together to achieve strategic climate planning efforts (i.e. land use planning and educational efforts, etc.), leading to tangible, actionable regional results. Future meetings on this plan are coming up soon and Melissa invited committee members to attend if interested. Brad noted that the draft regional plan can be added to the SharePoint site and committee members can offer feedback.

Discussion of Committee Changes and Priorities for Remainder of 2020 and 2021

Michelle shared the document, *Dutchess County Climate Smart Communities Approved Actions and In-Progress Actions for CSTF Committees*, virtually with the group. Brad explained that the Other Governmental Plans Committee was eliminated. In 2020 and 2021, it is suggested that the other remaining committee groups will work on the items highlighted as "in-progress committee actions," which can be pursued for silver-level certification; Brad noted that CAPI will be a bulk of these actions. Brad added that a committee chair is needed for the Outreach & Education Committee as Vikki Kelly (Cary Institute) is no longer able to be part of the group. Jacob Lawrence (Arlington Central Schools) is also no longer able to be part of the task force. Brad suggested that committee chairs begin reaching out to their respective groups to schedule future committee meetings. Brad encouraged committee members to think about actions they would like to pursue for silver-level certification. Gary asked what actions can be taken at the County level to further engage the community in composting. Brad suggested communities combine their efforts to develop an application for a shared services grant, which can be submitted to the Dutchess County Department of Planning & Development; Brad and Gary will discuss this further and report back to the group.

Public Comment

No public comments were received in this formalized part of the meeting.

Next Steps

A poll will be sent to the group to schedule the next task force meeting in spring 2021.

Respectfully submitted:

Shelby Frangk, Planner
Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development