

## Dutchess County Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Task Force

December 20, 2018 - 5:30-7:00pm

Dutchess County Dept. of Planning and Development, 85 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 107, Poughkeepsie NY 12601

### MINUTES

**Task Force Members Present:** Brad Barclay (Dutchess County Dept. of Planning & Development) (Co-coordinator), Steve MacAvery (Dutchess County Environmental Management Council) (Co-coordinator), Gary Basset (Village of Rhinebeck), Audrey Friedrichsen (Scenic Hudson), Mark Figliozzi (Town of Pleasant Valley), Jeff Irish (Sun Common), Vicky Kelly (Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies), Carolyn Klocker (Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County), Jacob Lawrence (Arlington High School), Europa McGovern (Hudson Valley Regional Council), and Brian Scoralick (Dutchess County Soil & Water Conservation District).

Other Members Not Present: Bridgette Anderson (Dutchess Community College), Dale Borchert (Dutchess County Legislature), Melissa Everett (Sustainable Hudson Valley), Christopher Kroner (MASS Design Group // Hudson Valley Design Lab), and Allan Page (A. Page & Associates, LLC).

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Eoin Wrafter (Dutchess County Dept. of Planning & Development) welcomed everyone to the meeting on behalf of the County Executive and the Chairman of the Legislature; he underlined the importance of this initiative which seeks to increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources, while reducing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced and increasing communities' resiliency to impacts of climate change. He explained that over the course of the next 12 to 18 months, the County will be seeking "bronze" level certification as a Climate Smart Community; the Dutchess County Climate Smart Communities Task Force will be the main instrument in implementing this goal. Eoin thanked all attendees for their interest in Climate Smart Communities.

Brad Barclay (Dutchess County Dept. of Planning & Development) introduced himself as co-coordinator of this task force. Brad also noted that Steve MacAvery (Environmental Management Council) is also a co-coordinator of the Task Force. The Climate Smart Communities initiative is a two-pronged effort, composed of both community and government operations actions. He noted that he will be the liaison between the County and the CSC Task Force throughout this process and Steve is able to speak to the community/public side of this initiative based on his capacity on the EMC. Brad/Steve will also submit any official documentation required for the certification on behalf of the Task Force. Brad encouraged all members of the Task Force to introduce themselves and give a brief description of their relationship to the Climate Smart Communities program.

#### **CSC Task Force Process**

Brad explained that one of the mandated steps to achieving a Climate Smart Communities certification is establishing a Task Force. He noted that the Task Force will meet on a quarterly basis over the next year to a year and a half, gathering the necessary data, conducting any required studies, and submitting documentation to the [NYSCSC program](#) through its online portal. The bulk of the work towards certification will take place "in committee." These sub-committees (or working groups) will include members of the Task Force and also other individuals who have volunteered to serve in the group, and will recommend implementable actions for the Task Force to undergo for certification. Brad noted that the Climate Smart Communities program and Task Force has a [webpage](#) on the County website.

#### **Resources**

Brad introduced Europa McGovern (Hudson Valley Regional Council) and asked her to speak to the types of technical assistance that the HVRC can provide to the CSC Task Force. Europa explained that staff from the HVRC received funding from NYSERDA to provide technical assistance to communities in pursuit of both Climate Smart Communities and Clean Energy Communities certifications. She works with communities in Dutchess, Ulster, and Putnam counties. The Clean

Energy Communities program focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and implementing clean energy strategies; NYSERDA has identified ten high impact action items to achieving this mission, which includes a Climate Smart Communities certification (Note: Only four high impact items are required for CEC certification).

Europa suggested that the County submit their three already completed high impact action items (PACE financing, Solarize campaign, and Clean Fleets/charging stations) to NYSERDA. She also suggested that the County continue to actively pursue the Clean Energy Communities certification per the Fossil Fuel Reduction Report, which can be collaboratively worked on with the Task Force, individual sub-committees, and the Environmental Management Council. She would also encourage the Task Force to consider future actions associated with climate planning, such as a government operations greenhouse gas emissions inventory.

Further, Eoin explained that Microsoft Share Point is a web-based, collaborative tool, which allows users to share resources and manage documents. This tool will also allow users to edit documents simultaneously. The Task Force will be the first County-affiliated group to utilize this resource.

### **Discussion of Scope of CSC Action Items**

The group moved on to the Climate Smart Communities Action Checklist, which outlines all the potential actions that can be undertaken in pursuit of certification. The CSC Task Force went through the checklist, considering which actions are already completed, can be dealt with quickly, and those requiring further study and action (which would elicit the creation of sub-committees/working groups to address these topics). Highlights include:

- **Build a climate smart community:** The first action category includes creating a Task Force and adopting a Climate Smart coordinator.
- **Inventory emissions, set goals, and plan for climate action:** The second action category includes developing both government operations and community greenhouse gas emissions inventories and action plans. Brad noted that County DPW already tracks much of this data, which could be translated into an inventory. Brad also noted that the CSC Task Force is an advisory body and cannot create policy for the County; these types of initiatives would require County Legislature approval. The group agreed that a sub-committee/working group on this topic would be beneficial.
- **Decrease energy usage:** The third action category includes conducting energy audits and improving infrastructure/facilities to be more environmentally friendly and efficient. This category may also lend itself to a committee to create a policy that the County could institute.
- **Shift to clean, renewable energy:** The fourth action category includes purchasing green power, conducting feasibility studies for renewable energy installations, and installing renewable energy systems.
- **Use climate smart materials management:** The fifth action category includes conducting waste audits and promoting recycling and organic waste collection within County government and to the public.
- **Implement climate smart land use:** The sixth action category includes adopting and implementing strategies that are aligned with smart growth and sustainable principles in a comprehensive plan, and providing educational opportunities related to these efforts.
- **Enhance community resilience to climate change:** The seventh action category includes conducting vulnerability assessments to climate change events and developing climate adaptation strategies.
- **Support a green innovation economy:** The eighth action category includes creating a green jobs training program.
- **Inform and inspire the public:** The ninth action category includes increasing climate change education and using various medium to educate the public on this subject.
- **Engage in an evolving process of climate action:** The tenth action category includes implementing a greenhouse gas management system and reporting annual progress highlights.
- **Innovation:** The eleventh action category includes implementing a new innovative action related to the program.
- **Performance:** The twelfth action category includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions and waste volume from government-owned and-operated facilities/infrastructure.

Before the next meeting, Brad will work on compiling a list of the actions that the County has already completed and those that still need to be pursued for certification; he will share this document via Share Point before the next Task Force meeting. Europa added that NYSDEC has a triannual application deadline for both the CSC and CEC programs – the third one for this year is July 2019, and she suggested that the Task Force use this date as a goal to submit already completed actions into the system.

### **Next Steps**

The group agreed that a Doodle Poll would be best to determine the date/time of the next meeting, which will be in March; Brad will coordinate this effort. Also, Brad requested that CSC Task Force members think about what committees they may be interested in serving on.

### **Public Input**

John Lyons expressed interest in volunteering for one of the sub-committees/working groups discussed at the meeting. He requested that some more information regarding these groups be presented before the next Task Force meeting. Eoin noted that volunteer opportunities can be added to the CSC webpage before the next meeting and can also be included with the next meeting agenda.

Susan Karnes Hecht stated that she is a member of the newly revitalized Town of Poughkeepsie Conservation Advisory Commission. She met with the Town Supervisor, Jay Baisley, and Director of Municipal Development, Mike Welti, and they are both committed to the Town's own Climate Smart process. Susan looks forward to the supportive collaboration that may come with these concurrent efforts.

Joe Heggenstaller suggested reaching out to Ulster County for guidance on the Climate Smart Communities certification process, since they have recently been through the process. Eoin mentioned that Europa is also able to provide a regional perspective to the group.

John Pfeiffer underlined the importance of green jobs training and having qualified individuals to implement these programs.

Legislator Edwards expressed her appreciation of the Task Force for undertaking this initiative.

Respectfully submitted:

Shelby Frangk, Planner

Dutchess County Planning and Development