

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

Tuesday, June 27, 2023 - 5:30-7:15pm

### MEETING SUMMARY

#### Task Force Meeting Attendees:

**Jen Cocozza** (DC Dept. of Planning & Development)  
**Melissa Everett** (Sustainable Hudson Valley)  
**Audrey Friedrichsen** (Scenic Hudson)  
**Carolyn Klocker** (CCE Dutchess County)  
**Evelina Knodel** (MASS Design Group)  
**Devin Rigolino** (DC Dept. of Planning & Development)  
**Brian Scoralick** (DC Soil and Water Conservation District)  
**Kelsey West** (CCE Dutchess County)

#### Not Present:

**Gary Bassett** (Village of Rhinebeck)  
**Joseph Cavaccini** (Dutchess County Legislature)  
**Mary Ann Cunningham** (Vassar College)  
**Michael Lauchaire** (Central Hudson Gas & Electric)  
**Europa McGovern** (City of Poughkeepsie resident)  
**Allan Page** (A. Page & Associates, LLC)  
**Nancy Severns** (DC Environmental Management Council)

#### Welcome and Introductions

Devin Rigolino from the DC Dept. of Planning & Development welcomed everyone to the hybrid meeting. He also introduced a new member, Evelina Knodel from MASS Design Group, to the task force and asked members to introduce themselves.

#### Review and approval of draft notes from September 14, 2022 and April 4, 2023 meetings

Devin sent the meeting summaries for the last two meetings to all members and asked if they had any changes. One minor error in the date on the April 4<sup>th</sup> summary was noted. With no other changes, Carolyn Klocker made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Audrey Friedrichsen. The motion passed and the summaries were approved.

#### Update on CSC actions for Dutchess County

Devin provided the following updates on actions which will earn points towards silver certification:

- **Government Operations Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory (16 points):** The GHG inventory is part of the CAPI project that we're doing with HVRC. Kelsey West attended the recent monthly meeting. **Kelsey:** I was encouraged to see that other communities have similar struggles and issues, especially as it relates to collecting solid waste data. There may be some leeway for adding data after a presentation is given.
- **Government Operations Climate Action Plan (CAP) (16 points):** Work on the CAP will begin later in the summer. After the GHG inventory is done, we will be able set the goals for the county. We've also opted in for a Climate Adaptation Plan, which will begin in the fall and will garner an additional 8 points.
- **Transportation System Climate Study (4 points):** The Dutchess County Transportation Council is making progress on the analysis of our transit system. Their website is up, and it includes an interactive mapper so the public can share their experiences and photos of weather-related events that had an impact on transportation.
- **Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) (8-10 points):** Work on the NRI is ongoing. By itself, it will earn 8 points. However, it will earn 2 more points if the Legislature adopts it. It is expected to be done by the end of fall. In addition, the state could award 5 more points for "innovative actions" which the NRI may qualify for since it will be released as an interactive website with an environmental mapper, and it is quite different from what other communities are doing with their NRIs. **Kelsey:** The criteria for innovative actions are very high and there are a lot of things required to prove that it is different. It is worth putting in for the points, but we shouldn't rely on them. **Evelina:** What does it mean for the Legislature to adopt the NRI? **Devin:** It means that it would become the official NRI for the County and it should be used and consulted when making future natural resource planning decisions. It could also be in the form of an MOU by the County Executive. It's more of an acknowledgement of the plan than anything.
- **Hazard Mitigation Plan (4 points):** The Department of Emergency Response is leading this effort, and the Commissioner of the Planning Department is part of the advisory group. It will feature issues related to climate, flooding, and the like. **Carolyn:** What is the timeline for that since it impacts other projects? **Devin:** It should

wrap up in Spring of 2024. **Brian:** The Plan has been rolled out to communities and now it's up to them to decide if they will be involved or not. The consultant is pulling it all together.

- **Repair Cafes (4 points):** We are working with the Division of Solid Waste to hold Repair cafes in the next 12 months. We're going to try to partner either with an existing Repair Café, or with a community that is struggling to host one on their own. We may hold our own in the future. **Brian:** We've sponsored them for years so let me know if either the county or a community is interested in having them. **Devin:** Helping a community that wouldn't be able to hold one without our support would be even better.
- **Climate-related Public Event (3 points):** The Division of Solid Waste will host an Earth Day event next year which will earn 3 points.
- **Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2) – Hudson 7 (6 points):** Dutchess County is one of 9 members of the Hudson 7. One of the subcommittees is working on a Drinking Water Source Protection Plan that covers a significant portion of the county, which should earn 6 points. We are also involved in the creation of a plan for Red Hook so we could potentially get points for our participation with that as well.
- **Environmental website & social media (6 points):** We're also going to create a new Dutchess Environment website which will house all of the different projects and link to the NRI, CSCTF webpage, as well as CCEDC's and Soil and Water's websites. In addition, to increase our presence on social media, we could post things about upcoming events such as Farmers Market Week, Energy Efficiency Day, and America Recycles Day, to name a few. We should try for at least one social media post per month, which could still be challenging since the County only has one page and there are many competing interests.
- **Annual Progress Report (4 points):** The Annual Progress Report would help to inform residents about the climate work and environmental planning that's being done. **Carolyn:** We can put the report on social media as well. **Brian:** We can also create posts on our social media and/or repost the County's for more exposure. **Melissa:** I would like to be involved in the education, outreach and media. I have been in communication with the Mid-Hudson Library Association to discuss the possibility of having events in the libraries. I would be happy to orchestrate the outreach for that. Chris Kroner and I also worked on some slides about an outreach strategy which I will share with the task force. **Devin:** Sustainable Hudson Valley and other organizations are already doing a lot of good work so we could easily partner with and support them as well. Could Melissa and Kelsey work on an outreach plan that will qualify as a PE 9.1 action for the rest of the year? Both Melissa and Kelsey agreed.
- **Community GHG Inventory (16 points) and Community Climate Action Plan (16 points):** HVRC is doing a Mid-Hudson Regional GHG inventory and CAP. We can opt in to those and receive a total of 32 points for participating, helping with engagement, and reviewing the Inventory and Plan.

**Devin:** I would also like to look at sponsoring a green vendor fair or green jobs training program. **Melissa:** Michael Darcy, Ulster County Dept of Environment may be able to provide guidance. Sustainable HV recently helped them to create a green economy network. The Green Business Bureau might also be helpful. **Evelina:** A lot of solar companies are also interested in training more local residents to become solar installers.

**Devin:** The points we already had plus the actions we just discussed will give us close to 240 out of the 300 points needed for Silver Certification. Kelsey and I also have a spreadsheet with items that we may qualify for, but much of it is dependent upon information we can get from other Dutchess County Departments.

### Committee Updates

Devin shared the following committee updates:

- **Greenhouse Gas Inventories & Climate Action Plan Committee:** The two projects are mostly being handled by CAPI. The HVRC Mid-Hudson Community Project will kick off in September.
- **Renewables and Energy Efficiency Committee:**
  - **NYS Cap and Invest webinars:** Audrey listened to one of the webinars and briefly explained the Cap and Invest program. She also expressed that she is not certain that it will earn points towards Silver Certification. **Devin:** It's on the agenda so we can discuss it and get a better understanding of it as a group. Although it may not earn points, it would still be good to have a short summary of it in order to

be able to answer questions about it. **Evelina:** Citizens Climate Lobby has an interactive online tool that allows the user to explore different scenarios and it shows the impact that different actions can have over time. They can also hold workshops upon request to allow groups to play around with it and explore.

- **ECCBG:** The County was awarded a \$260,000 voucher by the Department of Energy. There are very few restrictions, no match requirement and very little reporting is required. It can be used to purchase electric vehicles, install heat pumps, or even hire a consultant to create a plan. It's earmarked until January 31, 2024 so we have until that time to create a plan to use the funds. Jen and I will also have a discussion with DPW since they will likely do the work. **Audrey:** one of the tasks of the Renewables Committee could be to review the stipulations of the grant and match them up with the actions.

Each year, the county purchases new vehicles so if they were already going to purchase hybrid or electric vehicles, we can get reimbursed for those purchases. Or if there were no plans to purchase electric vehicles, maybe they can be switched. However, we may already get those points so I'd rather go with Audrey's idea, which is to figure out what can't we accomplished without the money from the Department of Energy.

- **Transportation Efficiencies Committee:**

- **Dutchess County Transportation Council Climate Vulnerability Study:** Tara Grogan, Planner, from the MPO and the Planning Dept is now on this committee. We've asked her to review transportation-related items to see if there is anything that the MPO has done or is working on that will count as qualifying activities. Tara is still researching it, but she has already identified some activities which will earn points. Can Kelsey and Melissa set up a meeting with Tara, Gary, and Allan to discuss the information that's been gathered so far? Both Kelsey and Melissa agreed.

After the agenda items were discussed, Devin offered an opportunity for the members to discuss other topics or ask questions. **Evelina:** Has food and agriculture come up as a target sector? Can we earn points with that? **Brian:** There's no ag or food systems discussions in Climate Smart Communities, the state is leading that charge. But some of the different county plans such as the Ag & Farmland Protection Plan and how they tie into community resiliency may garner a few points in those categories. **Devin:** If there was a sustainability element added to the Ag protection plan, it could possibly count as something innovative that would earn points.

**Evelina:** We could try to incentivize reducing carbon emissions on farms. But we could also promote local food consumption in collaboration with local urban farms. **Brian:** Rhinebeck is trying to do something with local food waste collections. If that happens, they may be able to capture green waste at the community level and keep it in the community. **Evelina:** Beacon has an excellent compost program. **Melissa:** There is also more interest in regenerative things like biochar and enhanced rock weathering, which might be worth exploring in the future.

**Devin:** Are there any actions related to road salt? That is the biggest thing the EMC has been focused on. **Carolyn:** It would be great to have them partner with the Education and Outreach Committee. There could be aspects of the outreach and education plan that the EMC could be engaged in and could help disseminate information.

**Audrey:** Do we anticipate that the action list will be changed in any way? **Kelsey:** It does change periodically, and the last change occurred in October 2022. Action items which might change are labelled as "under review." **Devin:** There are 3 that are under review right now, but I haven't looked into them in case they are removed.

**Carolyn:** Has a final decision been made regarding a climate resilience planning tool? The hazard mitigation plan would be a huge part of that tool and the CCEDC uses it for the community-level planning tools that they do. It's something we could help with if you decided to do one. We could go through all of the plans, answer the questions that are a part of the tool, and then compile recommendations for how to incorporate resiliency into those plans. It could also inform a future comprehensive plan. In addition, it might also be informative to the Climate Adaptation Plan. We're currently subcontracted with CCE Columbia County and 16 communities within Columbia County to help with their climate

adaptation plans and one of the steps in our process is completing the climate smart resiliency tool. **Kelsey**: Melissa has done a lot of work with that as part of another task force that she is on. I'm also part of a resilience group that has been coming up with a lot of useful tools that could be helpful for a countywide resilience plan.

**Public Comment/Correspondence**

No members of the public were in attendance.

Submitted by:

Charonique Roberts

Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development

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