

**Town of Stuyvesant
Climate Smart Community Task Force Meeting
January 5, 2023**

Present: William Schneider, Maria Ausherman, Kathryn Beilke, Julie Cerny, Brian Chittenden, Lee Jamison, Carol Leber, Kathryn Schneider, Hannah Shepard, Tara Donadio

Absent: Bob Green

Bob Green's contact information was corrected.

Tara Donadio attended and introduced us to **Clean Energy Communities**, the NYSERDA climate change program that complements DEC's **Climate Smart Communities**. Tara is the Clean Community Coordinator for our area, and it is part of her job to help and advise us in actions related to Clean Energy Communities. Tara recommended that we start out by trying to become a Clean Energy Community because many of the actions that need to be completed toward this goal also count toward bronze certification in the Climate Smart Program, and because once we become a Clean Energy Community, we are automatically eligible for a \$5,000 grant to do more climate related work.

The steps that need to be taken to become a Clean Energy Community are found in this guidance document

<https://portal.nyserderda.ny.gov/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=00P8z000001YYifEAG> beginning on p. 5.

By connecting with Tara, we have already completed the first step. The second step involves completing actions. NYSERDA has a list of 13 high impact actions that communities can take to save energy and mitigate climate change. These are on p. 7. To achieve the Clean Energy Community designation, we need to complete four high-impact actions, and send in documentation to NYSERDA. There is lots of guidance online about how to proceed, and a point system associated with the actions that can be used to apply for additional grants later.

Tara had suggestions about which high impact actions we might want to pursue. We agreed we wanted to try to pursue this at the town workshop meeting on February 2, 2023. There is a fair amount of work that will need to be done before we go to the board.

We would like to ask the town to adopt a **Unified Solar Permit**. Basically, what this does is standardize the permitting process for small scale solar projects like the ones people have on their roofs and in their yards. Having a Unified Solar Permit standardizes and streamlines the approval process and makes it easier and less time consuming for applicants, installers, and town officials. There is a tool kit for this and all the high impact actions with step by step instructions, (Tool Kits for all high impact actions here: <https://www.nyserderda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Clean-Energy-Communities/How-It-Works/High-Impact-Action-Items>). It seems relatively simple but Stuyvesant already has a solar law on the books so we would need to review it to see if there are any areas of disagreement and sell the idea of a unified permit to the code enforcement officer,

supervisor, and town board. There is a template for a draft resolution to adopt the Unified Solar Permit that is simple to fill out, but then it needs to be passed at a Town Board meeting. Kathy has a copy of the town's Solar Law which she will share with Carol who will read through it to see how it compares with the Unified Solar Permit. Kathy will use the online template to prepare a draft resolution that Bill will run by Ron Knott and try to get it on the agenda for the February 2, 2023, workshop meeting, which Bill will attend.

We could also pursue getting credit for **Energy Code Enforcement Training**. The Energy Code, which establishes minimum standards for energy efficiency for new construction and renovations is complicated and enforcing it requires training. To meet the requirements for this action, at least one code official needs to complete a NYSERDA-approved Energy Code Enforcement Training series and submit a copy of the notification of completion to NYSERDA by email. Tara thought our Code Enforcement Officer, Kevin Haberland, might have taken this training, and if he has, we need to ask him to send in his certificate. Kathy and Carol will talk to Kevin Haberland.

Clean Energy Upgrades is another action we might pursue. The idea here is for the town to document its energy use for its municipal buildings and move to more efficient technology to achieve a 10% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. This applies to all the town buildings that are 1,000 square feet or more. We would have to gather the data from 1-3 years, complete a spreadsheet and share it with NYSERDA. The technology improvements can only go back to 2016, but if we can document them, it's possible, we could get credit for some existing upgrades. If not, we'll at least have a baseline to work from as we pursue upgrades. Hannah will figure out which town buildings use energy, what kinds are used, and explore what is needed to populate the Energy Star Portfolio.

Tara also suggested pursuing the **Benchmarking** action, which requires the town to pass a resolution or local law to require annual reporting of its energy use in its town buildings to NYSERDA and the public via the town website. Again, we'd have to gather the data (monthly bills), get someone to be the portfolio manager and be responsible for entering the information, creating the webpage, and keeping it up to date every year. This one seemed like it might be difficult for our small town.

We also talked about **LED Street Lights**, another high-impact action. We have heard that the town is working with National Grid on this. We need to know more about where they stand and how it is being documented. Certain kinds of lights need to be used. Kathy or Bill will talk to Ron Knott to learn the status of this project.

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 16, 2023.