

Town of Stuyvesant
Climate Smart Community Task Force Meeting
November 28, 2023

Present: William Schneider, Maria Ausherman, Lee Jamison, Kathryn Schneider, Hannah Shepard, Jim Werkowski

Absent: Brian Chittenden, Seamus Donahoe, Bob Green, Carol Leber, Paula Van Meter

Minutes: Minutes of the October meeting were approved.

Reports at Town Board Meetings: Hannah will report at the board meeting on December 14. Bill Schneider will attend the organizational meeting on January 4, 2024, and Jim Werkowski will report on January 11, 2024.

Old Business—Reports and Updates

Trex Recycling – Bill reported that while Carol has been out of town, he transported several bags of plastic film to the library where they were weighed and photographed and then took them to Hannaford. He also sent the data and photos to Carol for our records.

Climate Smart Actions – The DEC climate smart database has been brought up to date for the two mandatory actions of appointing a coordinator and establishing a task force, as well as Hannah’s recently completed government operations greenhouse gas inventory and all the other Clean Energy Community high priority actions in the NYSERDA crosswalk. We have submitted a total of 64 points and completed all the mandatory actions, actions from 4 of the 4 required pledge elements, but only 1 of the 3 required actions for bronze certification. We need 2 more priority actions and more points to get to bronze. Task force members were encouraged to look at the website (<https://climatesmart.ny.gov/actions-certification/actions/>) and help identify actions the might have been completed and just need documentation or ones that could be completed easily. We think we should be able to get credit for some clean energy upgrades that the town has completed.

Forum on Climate Change Act-There is a forum hosted by the Columbia County on the state’s Climate Change Act on December 2 at 1:00 at Columbia-Greene Community College. Registration is required and several of us plan to attend.

Resiliency planning grant, Cornell Cooperative Extension – Audrey Kropp of Cornell Cooperative Extension contacted us in early November telling us that they were pursuing another grant for Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Planning and asking if Stuyvesant would like to submit letters of support to be a part of the projects. The grant deadline was November 17. Kathy and Audrey talked to Ron Knott and after much discussion we believe he sent in a letter of support for a Climate Smart Community Assessment. He had reservations about supporting

funding for a Climate Smart Resiliency Planning Tool (PE7), which he thought might duplicate and earlier planning effort.

New Business

NYSERDA CEC Designation Grant – We expect to receive notification that we are eligible to apply for a \$5,000 designation grant any day now. We have three months to apply from the date of notification. We have learned that the costs can be split across several projects. We discussed three possible projects:

- 1) a Level 3 ASHRAE energy audit of the town garage, which produces more greenhouse gasses than any of the other town buildings. Ron Knott provided us with a letter documenting the history of that building's energy use. He also contacted L&S Energy and learned that an audit for that building would cost about \$3,500. Kathy, Bill, and Hannah will work together to research the information needed for the grant proposal if we choose to pursue this project. The Town would be supportive of this project and this kind of audit counts as a priority action toward bronze certification with the number of points being based on the percentage of buildings or percentage of square footage of the total buildings in the building portfolio.
- 2) Converting the RR depot to solar power, which would effectively eliminate GHGs for this structure and simplify annual record keeping. Jim will research the feasibility and costs for this action.
- 3) Purchase of electric landscaping equipment for town use. Bill will discuss this idea with the Highway Superintendent and explore costs.

County Climate Smart Committee – Kathy was appointed to this committee at the town board meeting but now must be appointed by the county. The County CSC meets via zoom on the first Thursday of every month from 10-12. Anyone can view the meeting and all the past meetings have been posted to YouTube (see <https://climatesmart.columbiacountyny.com/>). Kathy has a conflict with the December meeting, but Lee will participate in her stead. Kathy will notify Don Meltz of this one-time substitution.

Nature Conservancy culvert article – Maria shared an article about how The Nature Conservancy is building culverts to allow wildlife to cross busy highways.

Recycling Price Increases – We learned that permits for recycling be increasing again for the third time the program began. Bill learned that as part of solid waste, recycling is part of an enterprise budget and must pay for itself and costs have been increasing. If people buy their stickers from the town rather than elsewhere, the town keeps a small portion of the money. Bill will try to find out how many stickers are sold locally. We are concerned that people will not bother to recycle if it costs too much. There seems to be a lot of confusion about what is recyclable. It is different the county and for the haulers that pick up at people's houses. More education is probably needed. People in Columbia County can now compost some of what is being taken in as trash.

Other Business – Kathy noted that the Kinderhook Village Climate Smart group is repairing holiday lights at Candlelight Night on December 8th, and she had offered to help to learn more.

Next meeting – January 23, 2024, 7 pm. We decided not to meet in December and to communicate via email if anything pressing emerges.