

Saugerties Conservation Advisory Commission

February 15, 2024 Zoom Video Conferencing

MINUTES

CLIMATE SMART TASK FORCE 5:00 pm Start

Present: Mary O'Donnell, Elizabeth Shafer, Mike Harkavy, Ken Goldberg, Kathleen Gray, Carole Furman, Skip Arthur, Robert Irizarry, Mary McNamara.

Approval of January Minutes

Ken moved to accept, Elizabeth second. Minutes approved.

Presentation by CSC/CEC Coordinator Eleanor Peck Re: Pathway to Qualify for CEC Grant

Mary introduced Eleanor who is a coordinator for the Clean Energy Communities program. Saugerties already participates in the CEC but Eleanor wanted to highlight some changes to the program and how it might also relate to the Climate Smart Communities initiative. Many of the changes are intended to make grants more accessible to more communities according to points accrued to reach different levels. She urges municipalities to move quickly because the grants are disbursed on a first come, first served basis. There are two types of grants available: Action grants for conducting community campaigns and Designation grants for the points earned.

Since Saugerties had already reached the 3,400 point level, she would outline how it might achieve 5,000 points. She went over some of the new tiered levels of qualifications. There was discussion about the Community Solar Subscription and how much is administered by the town and when it came online. There was frustration that some of the points were unavailable because Saugerties implemented some actions, such as EV charging stations, before the program was revised.

After some discussion it was estimated that Saugerties could qualify for \$100K in grants. The committee thanked Eleanor for an informative session and plans were made to follow up in the future.

Presentation by County Legislator Manna Jo Greene Re: Solar Mapping Tool Training

Representative Greene presented information on the Solar Mapping Tool and how it might help communities identify locations that could be protected from development. She said that NYSERDA is working on a mapping tool for the entire state. The training for the program is four sessions and she put the link in the Zoom chat. She noted that, although Saugerties has been very progressive in solar energy, some projects have failed due to interconnection costs.

Repair Café Sponsorship

A resident would like to organize a Repair Café in Saugerties. Mary requested that the task force consider co-sponsoring the program. As a co-sponsor of Repair Café, the task force would request a waiver of the fee to use the Senior Center for the event. There was a question about what the legal responsibility would be as a 'sponsor' of the event. Mary said that she had only offered to get access to the Senior Center and publicize the event. Apparently the umbrella Repair Café organization has a starter kit that costs the \$150. It was agreed that the task force would sponsor the event when they understand the obligation further.

EMC Report

Leslie was absent, no report.

Town Board Liaison Report

Zach was unable to attend but sent the members an email with his report. There was discussion about the town purchasing a hybrid vehicle and the benefits thereof.

Planning Board Report

Carole had nothing to report other than the Villa project still being active.

Announcements

Mary announced there is a Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program. This would concern the landfill emissions and a grant to mitigate.

Skip said he had attended a session on the Build Public Renewables Act sponsored by Assemblywoman Sharesta. It would identify areas that the NYPA might invest in renewable energy sources. Skip said he mentioned property on Churchland Lane as a possible location.

Kathleen added that by next week the town will know if they received a \$100K Building Decarbonization Grant to offset the cost of the Ice Arena's new chiller.

Kathleen had a comment on Central Hudson's Customer Benefit Charge that appears to penalize private solar installations. Skip had further information and said he has asked Senator Hinchey and Assemblywoman Sharesta to get clarity.

Mary asked Rob about the Community Greenhouse Gas Inventory. He didn't have much to report but said he is trying to identify the population on town sewer vs septic.

Adjournment Mary moved with Mike seconding. The motion passed.

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION 6:47 pm Start

Present: Mary O'Donnell, Elizabeth Shafer, Mike Harkavy, Ken Goldberg, Kathleen Gray, Carole Furman, Skip Arthur, Mary McNamara.

Approval of Minutes Mary moved to approve the January CAC minutes and Skip seconded. Approved.

Ground Water Issues: Protection and Supply

Mary asked Ken to report on the aspects of the issues of both protecting groundwater and ensuring it is in adequate supply for future development. Ken explained it was a DEC initiative and this was the second implementation, the first being judged very successful. It is called the Drinking Water Source Protection Program. He sent a copy of the newsletter to committee members. Ken said the DEC would serve to advise and develop a plan for the town. The 2008 zoning for aquifers was an improvement over the 1989 statutes. Skip suggested the CAC recommend to Zach Horton that the Town Board appoint someone as point person to obtain information about the program, Mike moved the CAC do so, and Ken seconded. The motion passed. It was suggested that Kathleen be the contact person and she agreed to it.

Mike added that the village reservoir was being used to capacity and might not keep up with development. There was discussion on the zoning for high density and a study on the capacity of underground water sources. Mike wanted to contact the Town Board to update the 2005 study. Mary asked him to draft a recommendation and propose it at the next meeting. Mike agreed to do so.

Adjournment Mary moved, Elizabeth seconded. The motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:21pm.

Prepared by: Kevin Freeman, Secretary