



## New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force

### Meeting Minutes: November 29, 2022

**Attendees:** Janelle Peotter, Mark Varian, Joe Londa, Orelle Feher, Jim O’Dowd, Amanda Gotto, Ben Eckstein

**Sustainable Hudson Valley:** Ben Eckstein from SHV presented the new group purchase program that is available to everyone in the region. Residents will be able to purchase environmental services and products such as heat pumps, home energy audits and insulation through the program and benefit from discounts that they would not get by purchasing them on their own. Sustainable Hudson also provides energy coaching to help residents create a plan to make their homes more energy efficient and has preselected vendors that will provide the products and services. Visit SHV’s website: [Group Purchase Program - Sustainable Hudson Valley \(sustainhv.org\)](https://www.sustainablehudsonvalley.org/group-purchase-program).

**Clean Heating and Cooling Campaign:** Eleanor Peck from the Hudson Valley Regional Council would like us to consider running a Clean Heating and Cooling Campaign in New Paltz through the NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Program. There are \$5,000 no-match grants available for communities that get five installations. Three of the five have to be heat pumps and two can be energy efficiency upgrades like insulation installations. Mark suggested that we invite Eleanor to our next Climate Smart Task Force meeting to tell us more about the program and to walk us through the application process.

**Harmony Hall Senior Housing:** Keith Libolt, president of Affordable Housing Concepts, is asking the task force to write a letter of support for the environmentally sustainable elements the company plans to include in the 51 to 52 unit Harmony Hall Senior Housing project on Manheim Blvd. He cites compliance with New York State’s Stretch Code, installation of heat pumps, shade trees and porches as examples. Affordable Housing Concepts was the general contractor for the Zero Place project. Libolt says that he has taken the New Paltz Climate Smart Resiliency Report (Cornell Cooperative Extension) and Vulnerability Study (ICLEI) into consideration in planning this project. Task force members stated that Climate Smart support should not be taken as an endorsement of the project itself, but only for those materials and design features that meet or exceed current sustainability standards. The task force decided to ask Libolt to send us a draft letter of support, which he intends to use to solicit funding for the project, for our consideration.

**Bitcoin:** Governor Hochul has signed the Crypto Currency Mining Moratorium Bill, which was passed by the Legislature earlier this year. Amanda pointed out that the moratorium does not affect the Greenidge Power Plant on Seneca Lake, which is currently operational while awaiting the outcome of an appeal to overturn the DEC’s decision to refuse to renew its air permit. Mark noted that existing plants, and those plants that will use renewable energy, are also not covered by the moratorium. Only those fossil fuel plants supporting proof of work crypto mining are affected. He added that New York is the first state to enact such a law, even though other regions have expressed concern about crypto’s use of energy as well as the noise pollution it produces.

**Climate Action Plan:** Flyers advertising the community survey that the task force will use for the Climate Action Plan can be downloaded and placed at venues around town. Over 70 surveys have been received. We need a lot more. Flyers have a QR code for access to the survey. Orelle offered to try to revise the flyer, reducing much of the text, enhancing it's marketing impact.

**Battery Energy Storage:** Joe followed up with Stacey Delarede, the Town's Building Inspector, but a date for a meeting has not been set to review the revised permit for Tier One storage batteries. Joe said he would set a time for a meeting in December. Corey Wirthmann (Village Building Inspector and Fire Chief) has reviewed the the model law from NYSERDA and expressed his concerns about hazardous chemicals, the fire suppression system, and emergency response plan. He said that the owner of the system should submit an emergency response plan.

**Climate Smart Schools Task Force:** Janelle reported that the School District's Facilities Committee must meet the state's requirement to perform an Electric School Bus Assessment. The next task force meeting will be held in December. Jeff Domanski's presentation of his program for the City of Beacon Schools will be the main feature. Teachers from the New Paltz Central School System will be invited to attend.

**Bike To Shop:** Janelle announced that a group bike ride to promote using bicycles for local shopping will be held on Saturday, Dec. 10. The 4-mile loop will include stops at local shops. Riders will meet at the Community Center at noon. The two-hour bike tour, sponsored by the New Paltz Bicycle Pedestrian Committee and New Paltz Climate Smart, will stop at local venues, including the newly opened Refillery, Lagusta's Luscious Café, Water Street Market, and Tops Shopping Center. Janelle stated that riders should come dressed for the winter weather.

**Action Groups:**

- **7Rs - Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Repair, Recycle....Refill:** See **Green Business**.
- **Green Spaces:** The pollinator garden grant application is in. We're waiting for a response.
- **Green Business: Second Nature Refillery at Zero Place** is now open! Tiffins are on sale along with other household goods and fresh produce. Bring your empty containers, fill them up, pile the goodies onto your bike, and you're good to go!
- **Green Transportation:** See **Bike to Shop** above
- **Publicity & Social Media:** The December Newsletter will go out on Dec. 1. Joe and Mark will submit articles.
- **Youth:** No update.
- **Alternative Energy:** See **Battery Energy Storage** above.
- **Lifestyle:** The next Climate Solutions Meetup will be on Dec. 6 at 6:00 PM. Greenway Environmental Services will present a program on **Solid Waste Reduction at Festivals and Big Events**. The next Climate Smart Book Club meeting will be held on December 20, at 7:00 PM, featuring *Inconspicuous Consumption the environmental impact you don't know you have*, by Tatiana Schlossberg.

**Note: The next New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force meeting will be on Tuesday, December 13, at 7:00 PM.**

Minutes submitted by Mark Varian