



## **New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force**

### **Meeting Minutes: September 27, 2022**

**Attendees:** Janelle Peotter, Mark Varian, Joe Londa, Amanda Gotto, Julie Seyfert-Lillis, Jim O’Dowd

**Meeting Schedule:** We discussed changing the Task Force meeting to another day of the month, possibly the third Wednesday. For now, it was agreed that we would keep the fourth Tuesday as our meeting day.

**Climate Action Plan:** Tabling continues as we reach out to residents for their ideas on reducing our energy use, and to invite them to the community meeting on October 11 at 7:00 PM. Plans to table at the SUNY New Paltz Farmers Market were curtailed due to a \$25 fee, which is charged for any group at the market. We may choose to table at one upcoming market day and pay the fee. Janelle said that the input from residents has been wide-ranging – driving less, walking more, cycling, using less plastic, promoting composting, reviewing bus schedules. There has been little push-back and generally great interest. Task Force members have tabled at the Sunday Open Air Market, Applestock, and Recovery Festival.

**Community Meeting:** The tentative format for the community meeting on October 11 to introduce residents to the process of developing a Climate Action Plan, known as New Paltz 2030, is as follows:

- Sign-in
- Introduction by Janelle and Amanda
- Consultants from Pace Land Use Law Center will explain the plan development process, and establish four topic stations.
- Attendees will move among the topic stations at 15 minute intervals.
- Consultants will review the ideas developed at the topic stations and those that had been collected during tabling at local events.
- Refreshments (Please sign up to provide refreshments).
- Final remarks – Janelle and Amanda

We discussed follow-up on invitations to local politicians, SUNY, and Town/Village committee and board members.

**Battery Storage:** Joe is presenting to the Town Board on Oct. 6 a proposed permit for Tier One storage batteries with two possible variations. The model law from NYSERDA makes several suggestions:

- Should we mandate fire suppression following the uniform fire code?
- Should we require an annual performance report?
- Should the stored electricity be self-generated (renewable).

Joe will send Julie an introduction to the Battery Storage Task Force prior to the board meeting.

**Pollinator Garden Grant Proposal:** Cathy Preston and Amanda Gotto are working on a grant proposal to expand the pollinator garden along Rt. 299 and create a new garden in the lawn area in front of the Community Center. **Partners in Climate Action Hudson Valley Ecological Restoration Grant Program** is providing the funding. If their application is accepted, Amanda says they plan to oversee the Community Center lawn with clover which will cut down the need to mow the lawn once a week, the current schedule. Clover seed and maintenance will be supplied by **Bloom**. A maintenance crew from Bloom is also pulling up mugwort once a month and putting in plant plugs in the pollinator garden planted a couple of years ago on Rt. 299, across the entrance to -87. Grant funding will enable us to extend the plot.

**NYISO:** Joe suggested we read the annual report from the **New York Independent Systems Operator (NYISO)**, which describes the state of New York's electrical supply and the projections for the future.

**New York Environmental Bond Act of 2022:** Mark suggested that we review and vote for the Bond Act, which is on the back of the November ballot (Proposition #1). The bill, which was included in an approved New York State budget, would allow the state to sell bonds to fund \$4.2 billion in environmental projects to provide clean drinking water, upgrade our community infrastructure, develop green jobs, advance environmental justice, and protect our farms and open spaces.

**Climate Smart Solutions Meetup:** The next meetup will be on Tuesday, Oct. 4, at 6:00 PM. We will discuss how to engage the local schools in embracing environmental upgrades such as solar generation and electric school buses. Janelle said she will reach out to the Middle School for student participation.

**Tiffins:** Janelle announced that we paid back the benefactor who provided the funding to purchase a recent supply of tiffins.

#### **Action Groups:**

- **7Rs - Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Repair, Recycle....Refill:** The Task Force signed on to the **Beyond Plastics** letter requesting that State Senator Manion and Assemblyman Hyndman not reintroduce the **Advanced Recycling Bill**, which calls for burning plastic waste.
- **Green Business:** Julie offered to spread the word about tiffins to local businesses and restaurants.
- **Green Spaces:** See Grant Proposal for Pollinator Garden Extension above. Bloom's crew will be working at the 299 pollinator garden every first Wednesday of the month. Volunteers are welcome.
- **Green Transportation:** UCAT bus transportation in New Paltz will be free as of Oct. 1. No update on the New Paltz micro-transit project.
- **Publicity & Social Media:** The October Newsletter is going out next week.
- **Youth:** See Climate Smart Solutions Meetup above.
- **Alternative Energy:** No update.
- **Lifestyle:** The next Climate Solutions Meetup will be on Oct. 4 at 6:00 PM (see details above). The next Climate Smart Book Club meeting will be held on Oct. 18 at 7:00 PM, featuring *Power After Carbon, Building a Clean, Resilient Grid*, by Peter Fox-Penner. This selection will be featured for two meetings. We hope to have the author with us at the second meeting on Nov. 22.

The next **Climate Smart Task Force** meeting will be on Tuesday, Oct. 25, at 7:00 PM.

Minutes submitted by Mark Varian