

**Vol 2 Issue 4**

**April 1, 2020**

# **New Paltz Climate Smart Newsletter**



**Climate Smart  
Communities**  
**Certified Bronze**

## **It's Official: The Town and Village of New Paltz are Bronze Certified as Climate Smart Communities!**

Last month New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos announced the latest round of certified Climate Smart Communities across New York State that are taking bold steps to mitigate and adapt to climate change. With more than 600 action submissions received from 23 communities, 14 local governments successfully met criteria to be recognized as climate leaders. The Town and Village of New Paltz are two of the thirteen communities who achieved bronze level certification and Suffolk County attained the silver level, demonstrating the increasing local interest in following New York State's nation-leading efforts to address the impacts of climate change through existing initiatives like the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act and Climate Smart Communities Program, as well as through new proposals like Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's \$3 billion Restore Mother Nature Environmental Bond Act.

DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos said, "Despite endless attempts by the federal government to ignore the climate crisis, Governor Cuomo remains steadfast in his commitment to ensure that New York is prepared for unprecedented weather events that threaten our communities. These Climate Smart Communities understand the urgency to reverse climate change and build a more resilient New York for generations to come. As we continue to seek innovative ways to integrate climate change into daily decision making, it's thrilling to see these communities

demonstrate how their bold actions lead to success.”

In order to be Bronze certified, every community must show that it has an active climate action task force that includes municipal and citizen representatives and complete a minimum of actions equivalent to 120 points. The Village of New Paltz and Town of New Paltz had to apply separately but both completed 158 points, 38 points higher than what is needed for Bronze certification. Examples of some of the actions taken here in New Paltz for certification included creating an ongoing Climate Smart Task Force, appointing a Climate Smart Coordinator, completing a comprehensive Government Operations Greenhouse Gas Inventory, adopting Community Choice Aggregation, installing LED street lights, receiving Energy Code Enforcement Training, having a Unified Solar Permit, providing publicly accessible EV charging stations, incorporating Smart Growth Principles into Land-use Policies and Regulations, doing a Climate Vulnerability Assessment, putting solar on a municipal building, and hosting climate related public events.

While we can be proud as a community for this accomplishment, we cannot rest. This is just the beginning as there is so much more to do. Within the Climate Smart Communities process, we need to do enough actions to attain 300 points for the next level of certification – silver. There are only three municipalities in New York that have achieved this level of certification. We are in a climate crisis and must not lose our focus even in the midst of the COVID19 short-term emergency and mandatory social distancing. Our committees and action groups continue to meet via online conferencing. Are you willing to help? If so, please send us an email at [newpaltzclimatesmart@gmail.com](mailto:newpaltzclimatesmart@gmail.com)

## Our Next *Meetup* is Refrigerants: The Most Important Thing You Could Ever Recycle!

### Refrigerants: Tops the list in Drawdown - Why and What Can We Do?

A Climate Change Solutions Meetup



NEW YORKERS  
for COOL  
REFRIGERANT  
MANAGEMENT

**Tuesday, April 7th  
6pm on Zoom**

The average American supermarket's annual refrigerant leaks = annual carbon footprint of 333 cars! Learn about refrigerants and how to minimize their greenhouse gas impacts from two members of New Yorkers for Cool Refrigerant Management: Michael Helme and Janelle Peotter

**Tuesday, April 7, 2020**

6:00 PM to 7:30 PM

Online Event

<https://zoom.us/j/501425483>

Join Michael Helme and Janelle Peotter from New Yorkers for Cool Refrigerant Management to learn about refrigerants, which are extremely intense greenhouse

gases. We'll discuss how to conscientiously manage them in your home and how refrigerant management fits into the larger picture of solving the climate crisis.

# Climate Smart Book Club

**Tuesday, April 28, 2020**

7:00 PM to 8:00 PM

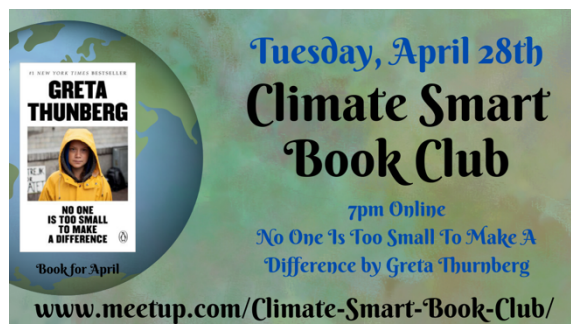
Online Event

<https://zoom.us/j/481773983>

For the month of April, we chose an inspiring book: *No One Is Too Small to Make A Difference*.

The book contains the groundbreaking speeches of Greta Thunberg, the young climate activist

who has become the voice of a generation, including her historic address to the United Nations



In August 2018 a fifteen-year-old Swedish girl, Greta Thunberg, decided not to go to school one day in order to protest the climate crisis. Her actions sparked a global movement, inspiring millions of students to go on strike for our planet, forcing governments to listen, and earning her a Nobel Peace Prize nomination.

*No One Is Too Small to Make A Difference* brings you Greta in her own words, for the first time. Collecting her speeches that have made history across the globe, from the United Nations to Capitol Hill and mass street protests, her book is a rallying cry for why we must all wake up and fight to protect the living planet, no matter how powerless we feel. Our future depends upon it.

Though we cannot meet in person, all are encouraged to join us on Zoom for a discussion of this book and Greta's words that you find inspiring. This book is for all ages and young people are encouraged to join us as well!

## New Paltz Preservation Fund Survey



The Town of New Paltz is interested in your thoughts about clean water, wildlife habitat, farmland, scenic views, and local history. Your response to this 3-minute survey will help us as we update our Town plans.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NewPaltzSurvey>

# Update from the 6 R's Action Group: Plastics

By Wendy Rudder

On March 3rd, I had the privilege of attending an outstanding and inspiring talk entitled, "Planet or Plastics: Moving Beyond Plastics" by Judith Enck, former EPA Region 2 Administrator, Commentator on WAMC, and Senior Fellow and Visiting Professor at Bennington College, among her many credentials. The workshop was part of the Climate Action Through Zero Waste Conference held at SUNY New Paltz.

Here are just a few the disturbing facts that Ms. Enck shared:

- By 2025 (at the rate we are currently polluting our oceans) every 3 lbs of fish in the ocean will be matched by 1 lb. of plastic. By 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the oceans.
- Our oceans are becoming the earth's landfills. 8.8 million tons of plastic enter the oceans each year. 90% of those plastics sink to the ocean's bottom, where they disintegrate into micro-plastics, and enter the food chain.
- 40% of the all the plastic produced is for packaging
- New Yorkers use 23 billion plastic bags/year.



What could be inspiring about such dire facts, you might ask? For me, it was the ideas she shared about what each one of us can do right now, to usher in a new era that goes beyond plastic. Here are a few to keep in mind when you eat out, take out, throw out, or shop:

1. BE A PRE-EMPTIVE CONSUMER: Bring your own re-usable eating utensils, mugs, take-out containers, thermos, straws, and whatever else you can to avoid using non-renewable materials such as the single use plastic and Styrofoam containers that abound.
2. REFUSE EXCESS PACKAGING whenever possible.
3. REFUSE UNNECESSARY & NONRENEWABLE ITEMS: Such as condiment packets, plastic bags and containers, or plastic eating utensils.
4. CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS: There are 2 Break-Free-from-Plastic bills that were recently introduced in both the US Senate and House of Representatives. Our NY representatives have not yet signed on. Tell Senators Schumer and Gillibrand to support Senate Bill # 3263. Tell Congressman Delgado (or whoever your representative is) to become a sponsor of HR #5845 in the house.

None of these suggestions is complicated or grandiose. As Ms Enke said, we simply need to do *what we can with what we have, where we are right now!* Please consider these small but important changes that you can make. Take action to move beyond plastic now.

# Natural Resource Inventory Project:

Our Natural Resource Inventory Kick-Off meeting was on March 24<sup>th</sup> via Zoom. After introductions, we reviewed the purposes of the NRI (Natural Resource Inventory) and expectations. We discussed how the NRI differs from, but complements, other planning efforts such as the Open Space Plan. We brainstormed what maps might be included and what the format of the online tool might look like. The completed NRI will be a reference document for use by town agencies, landowners, and others seeking information about New Paltz's resources and landscapes, and will provide guidance for land-use planning, land development, and conservation. We are excited to be launching this project now!

## Online April Meeting Schedule

Monday April 6<sup>th</sup> Complete Streets Ad Hoc Committee <https://zoom.us/j/615764750>

Tuesday April 7<sup>th</sup> Climate Smart Solutions Meetup: Refrigerants <https://zoom.us/j/501425483>

Monday April 20<sup>th</sup> Monthly meeting of Climate Smart Task Force

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/290898202?pwd=Ynk1TnJXWXNCbEtFTFBjW03WEs0UT09>

Meeting ID: 290 898 202

Password: 615579

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,290898202# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Wednesday April 22<sup>nd</sup> Earth Day - student strike scheduled for Earth Day will be online.

<https://www.earthdaylive2020.org/>

On April 22-24, the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, millions of people around the world are going online for a three-day mobilization to stop the climate emergency.

Join us for three days of action — from teach-ins, musical performances, divestment, and more. All you need is an internet connection.

Tuesday April 28<sup>th</sup> Climate Smart Book Club <https://zoom.us/j/481773983>

**For more information about New Paltz Climate Smart or any content in this newsletter, please contact:**

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**Call/text 920-883-1788 or**

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