

Volume 3 Issue 1
January 2021



**Climate Smart
Communities**
Certified Bronze

New Paltz Climate Smart Newsletter

New Year's Climate Resolutions

Consider making your own personal climate pledge this year – whether big or small. If you are looking for inspiration, check out this link to the New York Times where people from all over the country have shared their personal climate resolutions. Happy New Year!

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/12/29/climate/new-years-resolutions-climate.html>

January 5th Climate Change Solutions Meetup: Energy Navigators

Do you want to save energy for the planet, save money and make your home more comfortable? Learn from a panel of Energy Navigators! At the January New Paltz Climate Smart Meetup, the Cornell Cooperative Extension Energy Navigators will present ways to make your home more efficient while also saving you money. Depending on eligibility, there are numerous programs that can help people pay for these upgrades. We will discuss some of these programs and home updates during the Meetup. We are volunteers, so no sales pitches, and there is absolutely no obligation! We are trained to help people sort through the details and red tape. Our volunteer work is designed to work with ALL people, homeowners and renters!

Some of the topics we will cover are:

- ~Steps to a Net-Zero Home
- ~Updating to energy and cost-saving LED light bulbs
- ~Air sealing and insulation for seasonal comfort, cost-saving, and energy efficiency
- ~Options for upgrading your heating and cooling systems
- ~Ways to access solar power for all people. Solar doesn't even have to be on your own roof!
- ~Programs to potentially help you pay for these upgrades.

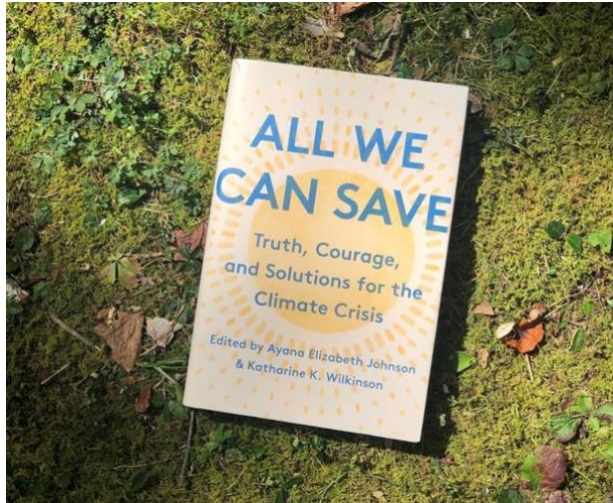
There are many other efficiency upgrades that we can discuss. We can also help guide you through the application and paperwork process.



helping people reach their energy goals

Join the Zoom Meeting at 6:00 pm on Tuesday January 5th

<https://zoom.us/j/98300120114?pwd=dm1KOXB6LzlRXZzaWZqQjBCd1o2QT09>



Climate Smart Book Club

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM EST

Our book selection for January is *All We Can Save - Truth, Courage and Solutions for the Climate Crisis* edited by marine biologist Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson and editor-in-chief of Project Drawdown, Dr. Katharine Wilkinson.

All are welcome for the online event via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/91066225574?pwd=TIVKMU9vNWkxMGE5ZzdTM2VabWMxQT09>

There is a renaissance blooming in the climate movement: leadership that is more characteristically feminine and more faithfully feminist, rooted in compassion, connection, creativity, and collaboration. While it's clear that women and girls are vital voices and agents of change for this planet, they are too often missing from the proverbial "table." More than a problem of bias, it's a dynamic that sets us up for failure. To change everything, we need everyone. This book is a collection of provocative and illuminating essays from women at the forefront of the climate movement who are harnessing truth, courage, and solutions to lead humanity forward.

Intermixing essays with poetry and art, this book is both a balm and a guide for knowing and holding what has been done to the world, while bolstering our resolve never to give up on each other or our collective future. We must summon truth, courage, and solutions, to turn away from the brink and toward life-giving possibility. Curated by two climate leaders, this book is a collection and celebration of visionaries who are leading us on a path toward all we can save. The book is available as hardcover, audiobook, and e-book.

"Women of all backgrounds—artists, writers, scientists, policymakers, and others—are at the forefront of climate action, and with this exquisite anthology, marine biologist Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson and editor-in-chief of Project Drawdown, Dr. Katharine Wilkinson, bring their voices together." – LitHub

"A welcome anthology, in prose and verse, of women's writings on climate change.... A well-curated collection with many ideas for ways large and small to save the planet." – Kirkus Reviews

Warm Up To Winter: An Energy Showcase

Please join New Paltz Climate Smart, New Paltz Climate Action Coalition, Interfaith Earth Action, and Cornell Cooperative Extension for our [annual energy expo](#) online event held on January 14th. Resources will be provided for homeowners, help renters and landlords to save money, and help the environment. Renters and landlords are especially encouraged to join us - there are specific programs we'd love to link you to that are vetted and will help you save both money on your bills.

WHAT: Warm Up To Winter: An Energy Showcase

WHEN: 6-7:30pm on Thursday, January 14th

WHERE: Online- [Register Here](#) to receive a zoom link

Participants include: Astral Community Solar, NY State Solar Farm, Suncommon, HWS, Rycor, New Beginnings Window and Door, Foamco, Citizens for Local Power, Sustainable Hudson Valley, New Yorkers for Clean Power, Hudson Valley Community Power, Hudson Valley Energy Navigators, & others.

Learn more about:

- easy & affordable ways to winterize your home, how to sign up for community solar & save money, and learn about different energy options for your home.
- free energy audits to help you find ways to save \$ on heating bills & electricity
- grant programs/funding for renters, low & moderate income households
- low interest financing & tax incentives for households looking to switch to renewable energy, do energy upgrades, & more
- renewable energy- community solar (great for renters), home solar power installations, heat pumps, geothermal & more.
- DIY weatherization, winterization & energy efficiency techniques, programs, and companies

Energy efficiency experts will be on-hand, ready to answer any questions you may have!

Compost Committee is Making Progress!

At the upcoming Town Board meeting, we will be proposing a plan to build three bins on the center island of the Community Center parking lot. The bins will be inexpensive and can serve as a demonstration of what people can build in their own backyard. We plan to also propose a pollinator garden surrounding the bins, nourished by the rich compost that we make. For more information contact Joanna Dempsey (joannamdempsey@gmail.com)



Beyond Plastics Class with Judith Enck

The New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force has as one of its action groups, the 6 R's: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Repair and Recycle. The order of the Rs is also important. This group would like to work on reducing the use of plastics since they have become so difficult to recycle. Registration has just opened for Judith Enck's six-week online class offered by Bennington College in February. You can take the class either for credit or just to audit.

Beyond Plastic Pollution is a public policy course that focuses on the systemic reasons why millions of tons of plastics enter the ocean each year. This cutting-edge class will focus on the how plastic pollution is an urgent climate change issue; how the plastics industry spins the myth that we can recycle our way out of the problem; environmental justice and the health impacts of plastic production and use. Students will discuss innovative alternatives to plastics and what each of us can do to address this growing problem. **This will be a particularly useful class for those who want to tackle this issue in their own community, state, school campus, and nation. There will be a very strong focus on public action.** The entire class will take place on Zoom, once a week and in the evening.

Course Dates: Wednesdays | 7:00-8:50 pm ET | February 17-March 31

If you'd like to join the class, you can [register now here](#).

New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force: 2020 Annual Report of Activities

Climate Smart Task Force (CSTF) Members: Active members include Janelle Peotter, Amanda Gotto, Mark Varian, Jim O'Dowd, Wendy Rudder, Orelle Feher, and Lynne Cherry

Bronze Certification: In March the Town and Village of New Paltz achieved bronze level certification as part of the New York State Climate Smart Communities Program. 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 required for Bronze certification. Actions taken in New Paltz that qualified for certification included: creating an ongoing Climate Smart Task Force, appointing a Climate Smart Coordinator, completing comprehensive Town and Village Local

Government Operations Greenhouse Gas Inventories, 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, conducting a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, having solar panels on a municipal building, and hosting climate related public events.

New Actions Towards Silver Certification as a Climate Smart Community:

- In December 2019, the Climate Smart grant application for a Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) was approved and New Paltz was awarded a DEC Hudson River Estuary grant. Climate Smart created an RFP and, with other stakeholders, interviewed candidates and selected Upstate GIS as the consultant in March. A State Master Contract was drafted by Climate Smart and approved by DEC in March 2020. The NRI kick-off meeting was held on March 24. Data sources and photos were compiled by the team and sent to the consultant over 2Q. The set of draft maps and the draft report outline were reviewed with the consultant and DEC manager by Climate Smart and key Town and Village stakeholders at a team meeting on July 29. The final maps, draft report, and the interactive Story Map were reviewed with the consultant by Climate Smart and key Town and Village stakeholders at a team meeting on Nov 10 and are currently being revised by the consultant. The target for presentation of the penultimate drafts to the Town and Village Boards is March 2021. Climate Smart has prepared the grant-required quarterly reports and documentation for submission by the Town to DEC for reimbursement of the consultant's invoices.
- A Town and Village Flood Mapping project was completed by Woodwell Climate Research Center. The project went above and beyond FEMA mapping by incorporating both riverine and rainfall flooding and also included climate-change precipitation predictions for New Paltz over the rest of this century. New Paltz was one of three small municipalities in the US chosen for this pilot program and was sponsored by ICLEI on the strength of our Climate Smart achievements and commitment. Although the consultant's cost is estimated to have been \$20,000, as a result of having been chosen for the pilot the project was completed at no \$ cost to the Town or Village. The project required Climate Smart to coordinate the provision of data and resource information and attend three team meetings with the consultants. The flood map presentation was given at the joint Town and Village Board Meeting on November 4th, 2020; has also been given by Climate Smart to the task force and the Town EnCB, and will be offered to the Village EPB, the Historic Conservation Board, CWOSP, the Town and Village Planning Boards, and the Police and Fire chiefs.
- Climate Smart Resiliency Planning tools were completed for the Town and for the Village with Cornell Cooperative Extension consultants, with input from key Village

and Town staff. We were sponsored by DEC Hudson River Estuary, at no \$ cost to either municipality. Results and recommendations were presented at the joint Town and Village Board Meeting on Sept 9.

- Updates of the Town and Village Local Government Operations Greenhouse Gas Inventories are in process with a student intern and support from Town Finance and Village DPW.

Task Force Meetings:

Meetings were held every third Monday of the month from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Agendas and minutes are archived on the Village and Town of New Paltz websites.

Education and Awareness:

- New Paltz Climate Change Solutions Meetups (141 Meet-Up members) are held on the first Tuesday of each month at various locations. The following were topics in 2020: Plant Based Foods, Measuring Your Carbon Footprint, Climate Smart Voting, Refrigerants, Climate Smart Investing, Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Your Electric Bill But Were Afraid To Ask, Dark Skies and Climate Smart Lighting, Climate Smart Landscaping, and Tree Planting.
- New Paltz Climate Smart Newsletters: created and widely distributed monthly
- Climate Smart Book Club established in February and meets monthly. 49 members.
- Presentation to New Paltz Rotary in January 2020
- Social Media Presence on Facebook, Instagram and Meetup
 - Facebook: 46 posts on our group Climate Smart New Paltz
 - Instagram: 43 posts, 262 followers
 - New Paltz Climate Change Solutions Meetup: 141 Members
- Mentored 2 interns – 1 from Wallkill High School, 1 from SUNY New Paltz
- Climate Smart Coordinator and Project Manager were invited to attend ICLEI's nationwide Climate Action and Adaptation Plan training. The course met twice monthly over 7 months.
- It should be noted that our normal face-to-face community outreach events - such as the Climate Smart annual potluck meeting, Earth Day Fair table, New Paltz regatta table, Green Fair table, Interfaith Winter Expo participation, Zero-Emission Vehicle Parade and Green Vendor Fair – were not available this year due to COVID-19.

Additional Related Activities on Other Boards & Committees

CSTF members participated on the Bicycle Pedestrian Committee, Environmental Conservation Board, Town Planning Board, Ad Hoc Solar Law Committee, Solar at the Landfill Subcommittee, Ad Hoc Complete Streets Committee, Climate Action Coalition, New Yorkers for Cool Refrigeration Management, Ulster County Solar Parking Canopy Working Group and Ulster County Climate Smart Committee.

New Paltz Climate Smart Calendar

Monday January 4th 8:00 am – 4:00 pm First day to ordering tree seedlings from the DEC Saratoga Tree Nursery <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/9395.html>

Tuesday January 5th 6:00 to 7:30 pm Climate Solutions Meetup: Energy Navigators
<https://zoom.us/j/98300120114?pwd=dm1KOXB6LzlzRXZzaWZqQjBCd1o2QT09>

Saturday January 9th 11am to 12:30 100% Renewable New Year's Resolution Party to be held via Zoom
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAqfuigqTosHtak1TAj3yV_mJKZ96TARxsL

Thursday January 14th 6:00 to 7:30pm Warm Up To Winter: An Energy Showcase
Online- [Register Here](#) to receive a zoom link

Tuesday January 19th 6:00 to 7:00 pm Stop Danskammer Film Premiere 6-7pm
bit.ly/danskammerfilmpremiere

Tuesday January 19th 7:00 to 8:30 pm Climate Smart Book Club
<https://zoom.us/j/91066225574?pwd=TIVKMU9vNWkxMGE5ZzdTM2VabWMxQT09>



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