



New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force

Meeting Minutes: August 16, 2021

Attendees: Janelle Peotter, Mark Varian, Orelle Feher, Megan Wolff, Lynne Cherry

Solar Canopies in Parkland Parking Lots: The Croton Sustainability Committee has reached out to us to contact our State Assembly Member (Kevin Cahill) to ask him to support and cosponsor the bill (A6838) to allow solar canopies to be built over parking lots at municipal and state parkland. The Senate has already passed the bill but the chair of the Assembly's Environmental Committee, Assemblyman Englebright, has not yet given his support. Kevin Cahill is close to Englebright, so his support of the bill is crucial. Mark suggested we ask Jen Metzger about this when she meets with the Climate Action Coalition. She may help us strategize our approach to Cahill.

New York Stretch Code: Jen Metzger has reached out to the Climate Action Coalition asking if she can present her views regarding adoption of the New York Stretch Code by the Town and Village of New Paltz. Mark mentioned that a representative of the Hudson Valley Regional Council had already presented a program on the Stretch Code to the Town Board and had received a luke-warm response. We all agreed that we should accept Jen's request to join the CAC meeting on September 16 and invite town/village board members and interested citizens to the meeting. There may be a conflict with the date, as it is during the Jewish holiday.

CCA: It appears that the letter from Direct Energy detailing the sources of its energy supply (including coal and gas) was not widely distributed in New Paltz and has not become an issue. We decided to keep pressure on Joule to get out in front of these communication gaffes in the future.

Utility Community Solar: National Grid, with the support of NYSERDA, has submitted a petition to the NY Department of Public Service requesting permission to offer community solar subscriptions to low-income households. To provide this service the utility is requesting exclusive rights to most of the community solar production in its region. Representatives of Joule Assets have asked municipal leaders to oppose this move as it will have a huge negative impact on CCA programs offering opt-out community solar, which our contacts at NYSERDA have actively supported. Mark will look into sending a questionnaire to Brad Tito at NYSERDA to get a better understanding of this issue.

Benchmarking: Cat Carroll from the Hudson Valley Community Council would like to present a program on Benchmarking, a Clean Energy Communities high-impact action, to the town/village boards and interested residents. This is a very intensive program that requires commitment from a board member or municipal employee. The task force welcomes the presentation.

Tiffin Project: Janelle contacted Ulster County's Senior Public Health Sanitarian, Cory Kassler, regarding issues we face introducing the use of tiffin products to restaurants in our community. He said that he had no problem with the use of tiffin containers for take-out, or in having tiffin products washed in restaurant

commercial dishwashers. Janelle also recommended the movie the **Lunchbox**, an Indian film, which shows how people in India are using tiffins. The movie has subtitles and can be found on Netflix. Orelle also suggested we look into using bento boxes. Janelle has purchased some tiffen containers at wholesale and is selling them, at cost, to those interested in trying them out. She showed us some examples as well as a fabric insulating bag. She suggested that CAC buy some and sell them (possibly at cost, if our 501c3 status allows) when we table at events.

Action Group Updates:

- **6 Rs – Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Repair, Recycle:** Mark stated that New Paltz Repair Café is scheduled for September 18 at St. Matthew's Church.
- **Green Business:** No updates.
- **Green Spaces:** Janelle would like to have another project set up for the fall or early next year.
- **Green Transportation:** Janelle pointed out that September 25 thru October 3 is National Electric Car Week. Samrat has agreed to head up this project. We have to decide on a date and time.
- **Publicity & Social Media:** The September newsletter will be going out at the end of August.
- **Youth:** No update.
- **Alternative Energy:** No update on the solar array at the landfill.
- **Lifestyle:** Megan has been busy lining up potential speakers for future Climate Smart Solutions Meetups. Kathy Michaels, a Beyond Plastics alumna, has been specializing on the negative impacts of synthetic turf. Janelle suggested that she could speak at September's meetup on Sept. 7. Jan Dell has been working on the lawsuit against Walmart for greenwashing. Janelle suggests that we form a panel to discuss textiles' impact on the environment. Megan also has been talking with Macy Gustavus, a specialist on microplastics.
- **August's Climate Smart Book Club** meets tomorrow at 7:00 PM. The featured book is **Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life** by Barbara Kingsolver & family. September's selection is **The Overstory: A Novel** by Richard Powers.

The next **Climate Smart Task Force** meeting is Monday, September 20, 2021 at 7:00 PM.

Minutes submitted by Mark Varian