

New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force

Meeting Minutes: November 18, 2019

Attendees: Janelle Peotter, Mark Varian, Wendy Rudder, Orelle Feher, Jim O'Dowd, Amanda Gotto, Jim Gordon, Hope Nitza

Welcome Winter Expo: Jim O'Dowd reported on preparation for the upcoming Welcome Winter Expo, co-sponsored by Interfaith Earth Action, Climate Action Coalition & NP Climate Smart Task Force. Janelle asked for a separate table for Climate Smart. The event takes place on Thursday, November 21st.

Vulnerability Study: The Study has been submitted by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. A survey was issued to the local communities and 148 responses have been received to date. A workshop will be held on Wednesday, December 4th at 7:00 PM at New Paltz Village Hall, and will be open to the public. Members of the Climate Action Coalition and the Climate Smart Task Force are urged to attend. Participants will develop and prioritize strategies to adapt to the effects of climate change.

Action Group Updates:

- **The 6 Rs:** Wendy will head up this group. She will contact Iris Bloom from CAC, the folks at UCCRA, and Michelle Zipp from ReSisterhood.
- **Green Business:** Janelle will speak at an upcoming Rotary Meeting. She will mention the Green Business Challenge. Janelle will contact Taylor Esque, a Rotary member, to get some direction regarding her presentation.
- **Green Spaces:** Mark reported that the second day of pollinator planting took place on Sunday, November 3rd. The Town had arranged to remove the existing ground cover along the 1000 feet of the Empire Trail just east of the entrance to the NY State Thruway. Volunteers worked the seeds into the soil and covered them with straw. About 12 people took part in the planting. Liz Elkin is working with the Town to establish pollinator gardens on other vacant Town green spaces.
- **Publicity & Social Media:** Jim Gordon reported on the direct action that took place at the Cricket Valley Energy Center on November 10th. He offered to continue to work on press releases. All press release requests should go through Janelle and she will send it on to Jim.

Janelle says the Climate Smart Newsletter is doing well. Please continue sending photos and stories to Victoria, so she can load them onto our social media platforms.

- **Youth:** Hope stated that she heads up the Environmental Club at New Paltz. She is working with Laura Petit of the NP Reuse Center in promoting recycling and reuse at the high school. She mentioned the school does not have an effective recycling program. Janelle suggested that Cathy Preston, who is on the School Board, should be made aware of the issue. Mark

mentioned that two NPHS students attended the last Climate Smart Gardner Task Force meeting and they asked for the Task Force to support their environmental efforts. Perhaps the two Climate Smart task forces can hold a joint meeting in the new year to discuss high school environmental initiatives. .

- **Green Transportation:** Janelle stated that she is looking for more members to serve on the Complete Streets Ad Hoc Committee. She is using Westchester's Complete Streets program as a template. She said that New Paltz may lead a campaign to lower the speed limit to 25 mph or lower. She and Mark attended the Parking and Traffic panel discussion at SUNY New Paltz.
- **Alternative Energy:** The CCA opt-out letter has been sent out. There are several upcoming outreach events on the calendar:

Saturday, November 23rd 2:00 – 3:30 pm New Paltz Village Hall

Tuesday, December 3rd 7:30 – 9:00 pm Elting Memorial Library

Saturday, November 23rd 4:30 – 6:00 pm New Paltz Community Center

Thursday, December 5th 7:30 – 9:00 pm New Paltz Community Center

Janelle reported that the town had received three responses to the solar farm RFP to be developed at the landfill. The winning bidder included in its proposal the removal of 17 acres of trees. The Solar Farm committee is meeting with the developer to revise his proposal to limit the removal of trees and to use more of the Landfill space.

Mark said he had a phone conversation with Toyah from SolSmart, a Federal program that works with communities to develop solar laws and rework zoning laws to promote solar farm development. Since New Paltz is currently deeply involved in complicated solar farm discussions it was agreed that we table consideration of the Solsmart program.

Lifestyle: The last Climate Solutions meetup was held on Tuesday, November 5th. John Wackman discussed the development and the life-style philosophy of the Repair Café. The venue was McFoxlins in New Paltz. The restaurant owner even joined in discussion. The next meetup will focus on sustainable holiday gift giving. The place: Unison Art Center. Time: 5:00 PM.

Minutes submitted by Mark Varian