

Town of New Paltz
Environmental Conservation Board
February 4, 2015
Community Center
7:30 pm

Participants: Jim Littlefoot, Rhett Weires, Laura Deney, Libby Murphy, Perry Goldschein, Mike Domitrovits; and Joe Bergstein

Dan Torres, Town Board Councilperson

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m.

Agenda:

Public Comment: Andrea Frank, artist and professor at the college was present. She is interested in scientific research and artistic ways of creating cross-disciplinary engagement. Andrea explained a 4E grant for sustainability (\$137K) study is available to see where ideal locations for renewable energy can be located in New Paltz. Renewable energy grants are available in NYS. She is looking for a letter of support for the grant, including the Town of New Paltz and the village. How can zoning be changed where renewables can be made the main source of energy (>80%). SUNY network of excellence (research) will review grant. Proposing New Paltz as a case study.

Project Outline: Not the latest version, but used for discussion.

***Facilitation of Renewable Energy Deployment on the Local Level—
A Case Study for New Paltz, New York***

In response to a changing climate, mandates to reduce noxious pollutants resulting from fossil fuel combustion, and overwhelming local support to move to “green” and local energy sources, New York (NY) is aggressively integrating greater amounts of renewable energy (i.e. wind and solar) into the power grid. NY’s current plans, policies, and goals such as the Reforming the Energy Vision (REV) program are statewide programs that seek to accelerate deployment of renewable energy resources. However, as New York is a Home Rule state, the ultimate success of these programs must be forged at the local level. Therefore, the purpose of this proposed work is to develop a holistic approach and roadmap to development and deployment of renewable energy systems on the local level, by fostering relationships among local authorities (such as Town and Planning Boards), local leaders of non-governmental groups, and the business and academic community.

With goals of generating more than 50% of energy from renewable resources by 2030 (NYSERDA 2014), and reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050, it is critical that a program be developed for local towns and municipalities in New York to follow to meet these auspicious but reachable goals. Such a program must include recommendations regarding zoning that facilitates renewable energy deployment, identification of incentive programs such as federal and state grants to municipalities,

and involvement of local officials and community leaders. Preliminary work by the proposal team (which includes architects, planners, artists, and scientists from SUNY campuses at New Paltz, UBuffalo, and UAlbany) has identified New Paltz, NY (including the Town and Village) as a willing and enthusiastic locality, participant, and partner that will serve as the focus of this model community-based renewable energy program. Therefore, the key objectives of the proposed work are to:

- 1. Identify existing or model local zoning ordinances and programs that encourage renewable energy deployment;*
- 2. Seek out potential grants for future funding of renewable energy planning and development at the local level;*
- 3. Hold a series of meetings and workshops with local authorities, business leaders, and community activists on planning, grant writing, and visioning. System drawing strategies will be used during conversations with the different constituents in order help develop synergies and working groups by directing the focus on systemic interconnections and feedbacks.*
- 4. Establish physical and aesthetic goals in terms of targeted areas of deployment of renewable energy facilities;*
- 5. Harness the potential of interdisciplinary collaboration from the outset of the process to create an innovative and integrative vision of a new living context permeated by renewable energy, which considers social, aesthetic, and ecological aspects at all steps of the work.*
- 6. Work with team members and Town and Village representatives to develop a model code for facilitating deployment of renewable energy resources.*
- 7. Create a forum to actively and creatively solicit community support and buy-in for this new vision.*

References

NYSERDA (2014): Final Report: Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Potential Study of New York State, Volume 1, Study Overview; Report No. 14-19; see <http://www.nyserda.ny.gov/Energy-Data-and-Prices-Planning-and-Policy/Energy-Prices-Data-and-Reports/EA-Reports-and-Studies/EERE-Potential-Studies.aspx>

Review/Approval of January Minutes: Jeanne is not available. Will review next month.

Opening in Board Membership: John House Wilson officially submitted his resignation.

Planning Board Project Status:

Wildberry Lodge: Discussion on height variance and footprint reduction; visual analysis supplement added to DEIS. Seems as though Wildberry is looking for a height variance in order to reduce impervious surface. Will defer comment until we see the updated plans. Viewshed will be a major consideration.

187 Plains Road Subdivision at Taliaferro farms. Two house subdivision. No comments.

25 Elliotts Lane clearing and grading application (creation of donkey pasture). Rhett thinks it looks as though they are trying to clear 1.25 acres to be used as a pasture for their 2 donkeys. No issues risen. Jim Littlefoot will look into the property and recommend

keeping any species of trees deemed valuable for the environment and/or as shade for the donkeys.

ENCB liaison report of Planning Board meeting. Nobody was able to attend last month.

Mohonk foothills addendum; intended use of 19 acres. Never got information on what the intended use is. Rhett will request info from the planning board.

Discussions:

Sewage treatment plant feasibility study; other locations; collaboration with village' should we play a role? Town and Village are engaged in reviewing a joint sewage plant plan. EnCB would like to be involved. Will wait to be engaged by Town, pending feasibility study results.

Town board liaison assignment? There has not been any assignment in 2015. Board expects this to happen soon. If not assigned by next month, we will make a formal request to the Town Board.

EPA has awarded the Village of New Paltz a grant for Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities. New Paltz New York is one of 22 recipients of EPA's building blocks for its sustainable communities' program grants in the area of flood resilience for riverine and coastal communities. The Village of New Paltz is the only community in NY receiving this grant. This is a technical assistance grant that will involve a 1-2 day workshop sometime between March and June. Members of the town EnCB will be invited to the workshop. Joe will request to participate in the village EPC meetings to keep the EnCB abreast of any updates. Joe will take a stab at drafting a recommendation to the town to establish a professional grant writer.

Ulster County EMC meeting report (Jim): County will be installing car charging stations and a 4MW solar array. Charging will be free of charge (no pun intended).

Parking lots subcommittee/MS4 designation coordination/Grants/EPA website (Joe):
Getting to Green: Paying for Green Infrastructure brochure. Good article on how to pay for sustainable infrastructure. Joe will script a letter and make a recommendation for a New Paltz professional grant writer.

A motion to adjourn was made by Laura, seconded by Libby. Meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.