

NS Climate Smart Committee Meeting 7/20/21

Present: Janine Kourakos, Pam Pooley, Nzingha Milanes, Michael Milanes Jr, Katherine Daniels, Edris Scherer, Leo Wiegman of Sustainable Westchester, Chris Brockmeyer, Amy Rosmarin, Nina Eisenman, Jocko McKean, Eric Pooley, Paul Presendieu of Sustainable Westchester and Janet Olshansky

1. Paul Presendieu of Sustainable Westchester. On Community Choice Aggregation
Sustainable Westchester is a consortium of Westchester local governments to support sustainability in our communities.
Programs are Community Energy & Community Solar
Electrical solutions & Clean transportation
Grid Efficiency & Virtual Power Plant (track energy consumption both for specific homes and for community = to roll back negative effects of climate/energy.)
Zero Waste (management of waste, composting, both for individuals and for the community.)

Goal of SW to allow municipalities to benefit from sustainable energy.

Meeting climate goals and being able to access sustainable energy and save money.

They help create Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) to get more equitable rates -- ie to buy bulk for renewable energy = more equitable access to achieve climate goals. Also work to educate the public and to advance local and NYS energy goals.

They have CCA in 28 municipalities = 1/3 of county. Yonkers is coming online soon. That will be huge.

Greenhouse Gas mitigation. Have already offset 7840 tons of CO2 = equivalent of taking 1,700 cars off the road in North Salem.

Forest Fires in US & Canada causing CO2 issues as we saw today with haze over NS.

Have Hydropower that are 100% Emission Free power.

Westchester Power Benefits:

Benefits of their programs: Residents retain choice to stay in CCA or return to NYSEG at any time.

Provide cost control and stability

No penalties or termination fees

No surprises

Notice of new pricing sent before renewal

Have public bidding process

= better outlook and stability in terms of pricing.

They also do advocacy and education.

Have outreach events.

All about mitigating climate change!

26 communities, like NS have chosen green energy suppliers

FYI. NYSEG reduced readings during Covid and underestimated what people were using so big adjustments for people when actual readings restarted

They pride themselves on competitive rates for sustainable power.

Standard supply & renewable supply their contract prices was more in 2020, for both renewable then & standard supply - renewable is 11 cents per kilowatt?

Town of NS has already gotten 2,600 points. When we clear 3100 will be eligible for \$10K grant. (We are already eligible for some money given current level of points.)

They have list of high impact things that give you more points.

Community Solar streamlines access to solar for residents == guaranteed savings up to 10%. Ability to get into hydropower.

In 2021 will allow CCA to access community solar for low and middle income people == more equitable & will accelerate access to solar power.

Another program: GridRewards = more efficient grid management – not available through NYSEG

They are in contract renewal process now with NS. Working closely with Warren. Will have 2 supply rates for both basic supply and green supply.

August = MOU signed with towns.

August 30th request for proposals

Early Oct. go out to homeowners

December = decision/sign up time.

Outreach is ongoing. They help consumers to read their bills. Does virtual community education programs.

Leo Wiegman of Sustainable Westchester had to leave the Zoom so Paul presented the Community Solar Presentation to us.

Q & A: Could we have a Texas like problem? Answer, “no” cause we have options. We have more transparency. And more resiliency

What is an ESCO and how is that different? Energy Service Provider broker relationships between individuals/residents and service providers. SW works with ESCO's which allows them to have more efficient & broader access to providers.

What should we tell people to do when they get approached by ESCO'? = Contact Sustainable Westchester as some are very aggressive/predatory. There are bad things out there.

Their job is to vet ESCO's. Contact Paul and he will do a background check on them.

Our fear is that people will inadvertently drop out of CCA. They are willing to work with us? They will do private mailer to people who have opted out.

We can opt into solar farm powers now. He thought there were 5 companies that people could opt into for the community.

As a community we sign up for CCA, everyone opted in until they opt out. We get stuff in the mail and we can't differentiate the ESCO's that are part of the CCA and which are not. How to educate the benefits? Answer: Have to show people to support this programming & identify/get the word out. Grass roots. Expanding the circle of people who know about these programs.

If you care about the environment is going with CCA the best way? If energy comes from out of state is that the preferred way to really offset their carbon emissions? They rely on hydropower as a consistent source of wind power.

We have a clean energy committee where this question was raised: how to get info to our community: how to ensure that someone who wants to use 100% clean energy. If we want to advise our community on how to source from 100% renewable? That's what we are struggling with.

Their long term goal is to have access to hydropower == that's their vision to have a bubble of completely clean energy at a price that is better than NYSEG's.

Horse Farm idea: to encourage horse farms to have solar panels on their roofs. How to incentivize them to have more panels then they could use? Leo would be happy to talk to them. They are willing to work with homeowners. Will give an estimate of energy generation. They want to produce enough energy to address the demand that is 100% carbon free. They will put together a list of ESCO's with the best reviews & track records. They are happy to help with that list that won't create extra work or get into legal jeopardy.

His email and extension are: paul@sustainablewestchester.org, 914-207-4118 extension 114.

Chris's committee will host David Sandbank for information.

3. Subcommittee Reports:

3A. Transportation: Pam. June 29th meeting. Homework: reread transportation of town plan & 684 Corridor report. They will go thru the report together. They had questions about where the town is right now. Ex. Municipal fleets & school buses can they become EVs? Could Senior Citizen Jitney become an EV? Warren putting in grant now to replace this old jitney. Looking into police department and highway department too.

There are 4 Community campaigns that can win us points: one is an EV campaign. Perhaps Hayfields would do an EV event. One event could give us 200 - points. Pam talking to Peter Kamenstein about this. Can get help from Community Council(???) to help us. Reaching out to car dealers too.

Transportation grant. Looking into that too. Discussing Bike path on 116 around the reservoir with Warren & Janine and crosswalks near Union Hall and Hayfields. They are thinking out of the box to access DOT money.

More of our fleet could become EVs.

3b. GHG inventory: greenhouse gas inventory. The Town Board approved a resolution to do the greenhouse gas inventory. Michael Milanese Jr. will begin working next week to input the data. Hope to have it done by end of year.

The Town Board is also interested in looking into adopting NYStretch -- early adoption of higher energy performance standards in our building code. Warren, Katherine and representatives from our building department will be meeting with Michael DeWein to discuss the details during the week of 7/26. Adopting NYStretch will earn us an easy 1,200 points and since the higher standards will become state law in 2023, it makes sense to get a head start.

3c. Chris on Clean Energy. They met 6/27. Covered things solved by Paul's presentation == how to move over to ESCO's & to facilitate people moving over to clean energy like solar. Also discussed horse farms. Will partner with Sustainable Westchester on this. Looking into wind turbines on cell towers. Looking at dams and to turn them into hydropower. Interested in scheduling a clean energy fair - community outreach. Discussed geothermal but decided there are too many challenges at this moment here. Need complete energy audits. Chris will talk to Warren to ensure that they aren't doing irrelevant or redundant work. Agreed they will use Bedford plan as their template.

3d. Land, Air, Water by Jocko. Met on 7/13. Suggestions to consider:

Name committee that gives it a townwide feel to bring buy-in. Develop a logo. Focus on communication strategy. Got into weeds on how to use less chemicals on lawns. Eating less meat. Recipe book for edible garden weeds. How to compost. How to develop air monitoring. Develop baseline for carbon sequestration.

NSOLF applied for a grant to sequester large amounts of carbon = they applied for \$5K grant.

Focus on climate resiliency, native plants. How to make the biggest impact? Talked about EV campaign and an EV event at Hayfields. Anti-idling event. Can tap into local resources like Open Land.

3E. Food Practices/recycling. Edris & Janine. Met in July. Looked at Bedford plan's progress highlights compared to NS. They talked about waste reduction campaign. Get a Fact Sheet for recycling. NS Improvement Society has put out information on recycling. Talked about the need to educate people. Talked about a logo and the race around Baxter to create Climate Smart Action Team to do the race. Have a design competition for the logo?

Community education is a theme here. We get points for community education so we should do as many as we can.

Bedford is doing some things that don't fit for us.

Make sure we include schools in what we do.

3f Legislation. Skipped discussion.

The Run around Baxter is sponsored by Open Land Foundation. Consider forming a team. Need to raise at least \$500 (35 participants).

4. Discussed ideas about how to use our first \$5,000 grant. Educational programs/match to NSOLF on sequestration project.

5. Questions for Planning Board's town-wide survey. Katherine will draft some preliminary questions for the committee to review and add to.

6. Katherine would like to complete a first draft of the Climate Action Plan by the end of the year.

7. Ideas for community education initiatives: Light bulb swap, solar home farms, community solar, geothermal/heat pumps, EV "show" at Hayfields or some other local venue.

Next Climate Action Meeting: Tuesday August 31st at 7:30pm on Zoom