



SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

Meeting Minutes: June 6, 2019

Attending: Peter Sheehan (Chair), Tina Lieberman (Vice Chair), Daniel Kirk-Davidoff (Secretary), Scott Kellogg, Laurie Wheelock, Joe Coffey (Water Department), Bill Trudeau (Traffic Engineering), Jillian Kasow, Lauren Alpert (Mayor's Office), Andre Lake, Sarah Valis (Corporation Council), Sandy Misiewicz (arrived during Public Comment).

Absent: Chris Spencer, Frank Zeoli

1. Regular Business

- Pete Sheehan called the meeting to order.
- April 4, 2019 Minutes Approval: Minutes approved unanimously, as amended.
- Public comment period (about 6 members of the public were present):
 - Joe Gorty of Ramsay Pl. Went to the Earth Day expo, and saw SAC flyers, just retired from DOT, interested in joining the Transportation Subcommittee. His email and contact info will be shared with Sandy Misiewicz.
 - Aimee Allaud representing the League of Women Voters of Albany County. She is also here as a Master Gardener and on behalf of Albany Goes Green (City, School District, DGS, College of St. Rose, etc.). Albany Goes Green would be available to give a presentation to us. Aimee would like to thank SAC for **co-sponsoring** the Down to Earth event at the Unitarian Church. Tina and Aimee feel that this was a great first step for future collaboration between **AGG Zero Waste Capital District (of which the LWV is a coalition member)** and **the SAC**. LWV has a position on solid waste management summarized in a flyer she handed out to SAC members with a cover letter.
 - Malcolm Bliss of 36 Summit Ave, speaking in regard to the water bill insert. NYSERDA has reviewed and approved the letter (and would like to replicate the flyer across the state). Albany Safe Energy and Solarize have approved along with the Water Department. Malcolm understands that Pete Sheehan will tell Andrea in the Water Department to proceed with including the inserts in Water bills.

2. New business

- **Presentation by Steve Flint** (DEC) Director of Air Resources. DEC has been monitoring air quality in the South End, in and around the Ezra Prentice homes. Toxics, Criteria Pollutants & Particulate Matter (both PM-25, and PM-fine (particulates less than 0.5 microns in diameter, which are especially hazardous because they may cross directly from the lungs to the bloodstream) are all being monitored. Correlation with traffic in pollution levels is clear. CDTA did a traffic study, and the State DOT installed permanent traffic counters. Instrumentation is still



there (somewhat removed). Instruments on 3rd Ave have been moved to Buffalo where there was an urgent need. Backpack monitoring has been used to get detailed measurements of street-level air pollution. Staff and student volunteers have logged 700 miles walking in the community with these. Trucks going by can be seen as spike in fine particulates in the sensor data. Measuring particles at different distances from the road. Ultrafines drop off rapidly as distance from roads increases, as agglomeration of ultrafines into larger particles and some sublimation/evaporation occur. Extensive benzene monitoring has also been performed. The highest concentrations are observed close to the loading racks at the Port in Rensselaer. PM numbers are worst at the monitoring station near I-787, (higher than at Ezra Prentice) since traffic is such a dominant source. Steve is very appreciative of the level of support the project has gotten from everyone involved (Mayor's office, CDTA, Housing Authority, etc.). Several measures have been taken to improve air pollution in the South End. The Mayor has directed City vehicles to avoid going by Ezra Prentice homes when possible, and the speed limit has been reduced to 25 mph. A summary report will be coming out soon; DEC staff will be wrapping it up soon. It will be about a hundred pages plus appendices. Dan Kirk-Davidoff asked about neighborhood monitoring using low-cost wifi-connected PM2.5 detectors. Steve was cautiously enthused about the idea and offered help to set up a plan to interpret the data carefully and with respect for the error characteristics. Scott asks if the State have any regulations regarding lead or asbestos during building demolitions? Lauren stated that there are requirements, but they may be waived for emergency demolitions. Steve stated that regulations are in the Department of Labor, not DEC Air Resources.

- Lauren Alpert on Climate Smart Communities. She thanked everyone for uploading materials to the DropBox. She asked us to make sure emails indicate which pledge element (PE) number the materials refer to. Tara Donadio (CDRPC) has been a great help. Tina added that one of the action items had to do with minimizing waste and improving energy efficiency in our contracting. Tina noted that we could be including anti-idling measures (at least notifying residents that the City ordinance limits idling to 5 minutes) in City contracting, and we could get points for this for in the Climate Smart Communities recertification application. Sarah Valis has taken contracts over in the Corporation Counsel's office and will take this under advisement. Lauren noted that we could stand to do more education on this issue, because it's not widely known or enforced. Sandy noted that the anti-idling flyer exists and parking enforcement could be leafleting about this while they're out walking (but enforcers are employees of Albany Parking authority). Tina also noted that Energy Star appliances or similar could also be encouraged in City contracts. Tina will email Sarah about the CSC point system for this item.
- Sandy Misiewicz (Transportation). EV user survey results: 100 responses, 68 from residents of Albany. 21 of 68 were in Pine Hills, then Buckingham Pond (9), a few from Center Square etc. Only half of respondents actually owned or leased an EV.



Most people drive 1-9 miles (many less) to work, but the average daily driving was less. Overwhelmingly people charge at home. Besides that, charge locations were scattered. People would be willing to pay about \$0.18/kWh (\$2-\$4/charge). Main perceived barriers were access to charging stations and initial price of vehicle. The question arose as to how to expand survey to be more representative? Could we get the Honest Weight to allow someone to put in member hours surveying people who use their charge station? Tina suggests having paper versions at tabling events. Overwhelming response was that there aren't enough charging stations in the City, and there need to be many more downtown.

- Transportation and Land Use connections. Sandy feels that the SAC should be communicating the value of walkable communities and the importance of land use for sustainability. We should put together a white paper that puts together some bullet points that counter misinformation. Joe Coffey seconded this point, especially with regard to storm water management and combined sewer overflow issues. Another example given was that dense developments typically attract people who are less likely to own cars, so they don't result in parking problems, but this is not widely understood.
- Speaking at Public Forums and Representing the SAC. Pete reminded members that we need to be clear when we speak in public forums (e.g. before the Common Council) that we specify that we aren't speaking for the SAC (unless we have specific authorization). Tina suggests that we should be reporting out to the Common Council every meeting, or at least once a month. Joe Coffey suggests we should brief the mayor's office as well. Tina and Pete will talk about doing this at an upcoming Common Council meeting in July, based on our minutes.
- City Energy Manager. Pete Sheehan drafted a *letter* (attached) to the Mayor urging her to fill the position of Energy Manager. Committee suggests that the letter could be a little more specific about the energy savings, hopefully demonstrating that the position pays for itself. Pete will contact Kevin Luteran at NYPA and see if he can put together some reports indicating savings from the previous Energy Manager's work (who was paid by NYPA). But rather than wait two months, Tina makes a motion *that we approve the letter as is*, and continue to do research. *Motion passes unanimously.*

1. Commissioner updates

- Joe Coffey (Water). Good news: The conservation easement at the Alcove/Basic Creek Watershed lands owned by the Albany Water Board has been executed with the Nature Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy. The Water Board ~~will obtain~~ has contracts for purchase of voluntary carbon credits from two organizations. Funds resulting from the sale of the carbon credits will be deposited in a dedicated Water Board fund that will support watershed related projects.

1. Committee updates



- Scott Kellogg (Agriculture): Chicken legislation (to allow homeowners to keep chickens) is moving forward. After negotiations, the law will be set-up as a pilot program. There will be a two-year sunset clause, cap of 80 permits in the first year. Each permit allows up to six chickens. Delinquent chickens will be accepted by Radix. Seems to be moving along in the Common Council.
- Sandy Misiewicz (Transportation): Committee is planning to evaluate a set of street safety programs. They are researching three of them and will report back on results. Next meeting is July 8. \$20 million grant received by the CDTA for the River Corridor BRT. Not completely committed to 100% EV, they want to be sure the EV buses will perform well in cold weather. First four EV buses will arrive this month and hit the streets in September.
- Pete Sheehan (Energy): Continuing work on Climate Smart Communities recertification. The request of the Energy Subcommittee sent by the SAC last year to the Mayor and Common Council directed the Industrial Development Agency to require or encourage energy efficiency measures and/or renewable energy features as a condition of receiving any tax breaks or incentives prior to beginning any new developments. This request was listed as an item in a recent Common Council agenda, which is very encouraging. It was put forward by Council person Cathy Fahy. Also, NYSERDA has completed its stretch codes work and will come and explain to us the stretch building codes to help us put a proposal together.
- Tina Lieberman (Zero Waste Education): Tina thanked the Water Board and Radix and the Urban Agriculture and Outreach subcommittees for participating in the Down to Earth event at for Earth Day at the Albany UU Church. The feedback was that people loved the vendors and wished there'd been a little more time. Renewable Energy and Sustainable Living Fair will be at the Sage Colleges (Albany) Armory this year, and all of our Subcommittees should have tables! It will probably be the weekend before the Saturday before Halloween, but might be later. The SAC may be able to have speakers on Sustainability. Sandy asked Tina to send out an agenda or description from the last few years. The Zero Waste committee has been collecting food scraps from vendors at the Tulip Festival and the Workforce Challenge Race (folks from DEC helped), Gay Pride Picnic, and they'll cover the Pride Parade this weekend and at the Jazz Festival in the fall. Amy Allaud is looking into Mississippi Day, and another organizer is looking into Lark Fest in terms of engaging in waste recovery. Radix does compost pickup in the City and Diana Wright from Food Scraps 360 covers a large region in Albany, Schenectady and Rensselaer Counties. Albany County Water Purification District and Saratoga County have plans to fund anaerobic digesters at the Port of Albany and in Menands, whose resulting methane would be used for power or maybe to fuel the county fleet. Tina also mentioned that Scott and Dan and she were on a panel at the Damien Center for the New Leaders Council.
- Laurie Wheelock (Water): The committee has done outreach to neighborhood associations (Beverwyck, Helderberg, others). She's reached out to SUNY Albany to



get professors involved in the work, also to folks at the Albany Law School. Laurie is hoping to get the Water Department some interns that could research sustainability topics. She is also thinking of doing a tour of the Alcove Reservoir in the fall to show off some of the parts of the Water system that aren't below ground. Joe Coffey suggested they talk to Amy Walsh, watershed manager, about using a drone to put a narrative video together. Tina suggests plastics reduction education. Joe would like to do climate impact studies- sewers already experience back-up from high tides in the Hudson and the water department will need to put in tide gates to address this.

*A motion was made for SAC to co-sponsor **this Earth Day event**. Not sure what event this is referring to? SAC votes unanimously in favor; the motion is passed.*

1. Action Items/ Discussion of next meeting on August 1
 - Marilyn Dare from NYSERDA will discuss Stretch Codes

1. Adjournment: the meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm. Next meeting is Thursday, August 1.

Minutes prepared by Daniel Kirk-Davidoff, July 6, 2019



SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

June 6, 2019

Honorable Kathy Sheehan, Mayor
Albany City Hall
24 Eagle Street
Albany, NY 12207

RE: City Energy Manager Position

Dear Mayor Sheehan;

As you know, the City of Albany was declared a Climate Smart Community (CSC) back in 2014 based upon the implementation of various energy efficiency/sustainability practices and policies. Currently, the Sustainability Advisory Council is in the process of assisting the Department of Planning in researching records to facilitate the preparation of the documents required to achieve recertification as a Climate Smart Community. For example, staff at the Department of General Services recently assisted our Energy Subcommittee's (ES) efforts in retrieving documents validating the installation of high-efficiency steam boilers in City Hall and the Lake House building in Washington Park. It is this type of cooperation that is much appreciated and necessary. The deadline for submitting the recertification paperwork is July 1.

During this recertification process it became clear that it is necessary for Albany to have a full time energy manager. The previous City Energy Manager, Kevin Luteran, was instrumental in setting up an Energy Management System and producing reports that document energy reductions and cost savings. There are several similar reports that the SAC will need in our recertification efforts. While the Planning staff will be helpful in this regard, it points out the critical need to fill the position of Energy Manager.

Moreover, while reviewing the CSC forms required for reclassification, the ES more fully appreciated the many facets of City activities that involve the Energy Manager. A prime example is the "GHG Tracking System," which requires both a tracking system and qualified personnel to implement the system and produce meaningful reports. The system is important as it allows the City to gauge its GHG reductions since the baseline was established a number of years ago and to offer the citizens of Albany accountability regarding the City's progress. The Energy Manager's role is essential to the successful implementation of the GHG tracking system and has resulted in saving the City thousands of dollars in energy costs.



We would like to see the position of Energy Manager filled as soon as possible and funded from the regular budget. Our hope is that the person will be a full time City of Albany employee. As in the past, we are available to screen/interview candidates for this position. We look forward to that process and bringing a full time Energy Manager on board.

Sincerely,

Members of the Albany Sustainability Advisory Council