



## SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

Meeting Minutes: October 3, 2019

**Attending:** Peter Sheehan (Chair), Tina Lieberman (Vice Chair), Daniel Kirk-Davidoff (Secretary), Ewa Sobczynska (Outreach), Scott Kellogg (Agriculture), Laurie Wheelock, Joe Coffey (Water Department), Bill Trudeau (Traffic Engineering), Lauren Alpert (Mayor's Office), Sandy Misiewicz (Transportation), Andre Lake, Frank Zeoli (Operations), Randy Milano (Engineering).

**Absent:** Sarah Valis (Corporation Council), Allison Bradley.

### 1. Regular Business

- Pete Sheehan called the meeting to order.
- June 6, 2019 Minutes Approval: Minutes approved unanimously, as amended.
- Public comment period (about 6 members of the public were present):
  - Aileen Burke and Emily Paolicelli. They are editors of the St. Rose Chronicle and interested in the Climate Smart Community program.
  - Malcolm Bliss representing Solarize Albany, had a comment about the Water Bill Insert to make people aware of NYSERDA's Community Solar program. Solarize Albany has been getting responses from the first insert that went out with this month's water bill. Twenty-four enrollments are in process, eleven completed. This is the best performance in Solarize's history, and is about 5-6 times the usual rate of enrollments.

### 2. New business

- Joint presentation regarding NYSERDA Stretch Codes – Marilyn Dare, NYSERDA and Tara Donadio, Capital District Regional Planning Commission. An extensive slideshow is available at <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Programs/Energy-Code-Training/NYStretch-Energy-Code-2020>. Many questions were asked and answered. There was a discussion on the risk of disincentivizing development due to increased cost if Albany adopts a stretch code. This could be mitigated by, for example, through exceptions to the stretch code for historic buildings.
- City Energy Manager. This position was included in the Mayor's budget at a total all cost of \$68,000. Pete anticipates that SAC will be involved in the interview process for candidates.

- Climate Smart Communities. Lauren reports that the City has been officially recertified, and thanks SAC members for help with documents. The recertification is for five years (through September, 2024), with potential at any time to apply for Silver certification (which is the highest level at present). Tina suggests that we look over the list of items that could potentially get us to the Silver level, and request that department heads also look for items. We commit to discussing potential action items (not yet claimed for credit) in our subcommittee meetings and bringing back one or two as goals for implementation in 2020. It was agreed that we should all think about some items that don't fit in our committee structure (e.g. purchasing ).
- Vacancy: Jill Kassow's position (which was appointed by the Common Council) is open. Lauren will follow-up with Common Council.
- Community Choice Aggregation Update. Tina reports that 1) there is an aggregation forming in the Capital Region (New Scotland, Bethlehem & Guilderland). They chose an administrator (MEGA). Glens Falls, Saratoga Springs, Niskayuna, Watervliet is close to joining, Vorheesville, Altamont, Knox are reviewing the administrator agreement, and Troy is interviewing the three potential administrators. The Common Council voted unanimously to recommend joining. The Mayor needs to act by November 1 to join the presently forming aggregation. This would be equivalent in carbon reduction to 10x the replacement of streetlights with LED bulbs. MEGA's goal will be to get the most renewable power in package that beats the National Grid rate, as well as a 100% renewable option (each municipality can choose which option will be the default). Pete adds that the PSC has mandated that RECs are purchased from sources that actually deliver electricity within and into New York State. Ewa asked about what does the City actually has to do by November 1. Tina reports that the Mayor is in favor. There will be a meeting with Chris Spencer, Cathy Fahey, and a representative of the Mayor's Office. Main procedural step is that the Corporation Council needs to review and approve the administrator agreement. After Nov 1, there's a 60 day education period, followed by a process described at <http://www.megacca.org/cca-101/> . The City would need to make a final decision by sometime in the Spring of 2020.

#### 4. Commissioner updates

- Joe Coffey (Water). A press event is scheduled for October 10th regarding the sale of Carbon Credits related to Alcove/Basic Creek Watershed agreement with The Nature Conservancy and Mohawk Hudson Land Trust. The Daylighting of Patroon Creek at Tivoli Preserve is almost done. The Albany Water Department is considering issuing an RFP for a Resiliency study of water and sewer infrastructure. This will be discussed with the Water subcommittee. The AWD is updating the "safe yield" study of the Alcove Water Supply system; one of their consultants has been authorized to begin that process.
- Randy Milano (Engineering). The Master Plan for the preservation of City Hall is nearing completion. The architect has located the original (1883) architectural drawings for the building. At the end of October, electrical & mechanical consultants will be coming through the building, plans will go into motion in April 2020.

- Bill Trudeau (Traffic Engineering). Consultant selection process has begun to obtain federal funds for construction in late 2020 through the end of 2021 of improvements in signaling for pedestrian safety at intersections. The City has been designated as a pedestrian safety Focus City by the State and Federal DOT.

5. Committee updates

- Scott Kellogg (Agriculture): Legislation (to allow homeowners to keep chickens) has passed the Common Council and been signed by the Mayor. Citizens can have up to six chickens. We don't know if anyone has applied for a permit yet. Scott will follow up with the City to see about uptake.
- Sandy Misiewicz (Transportation): Committee did not meet in September. Volkswagen settlement includes a rebate for municipalities who purchase zero emission vehicles. \$500,000 is available statewide for vehicles, \$2,000,000 for infrastructure. First come, first served, via an application process. \$2,500 - \$5,000 will be available per vehicle. Nick Blaise in the Budget Office is responsible for writing these grants (and has been working on it for a while). The City has an RFP out for a bicycle and pedestrian Master Plan. New Scotland Traffic Study (Main Ave to Whitehall Rd) public meeting will be Monday night at 5:30 at Mercy House. CDTA River Corridor project is now under construction. The Purple Line (Washington/Western Corridor) is not far behind. CDTA has purchased one electric bus, working on four more.
- Pete Sheehan (Energy): The subcommittee met two days ago. Five people from NYPA came to talk about their Energy Manager software/hardware offerings. They already have meters and sensors on several buildings (down to pieces of equipment in some cases). Immediate conclusion: the Golf Course clubhouse uses significant amounts of energy (the most on a square foot basis) as does Firehouse 7.
- Ewa Sobczynska (Outreach). The subcommittee has reached out to neighborhood associations, but hasn't scheduled any new meetings since the summer. We have scheduled a meeting with the Central Avenue Business Improvement District and will be reaching out to Lark and Downtown BIDs.
- Laurie Wheelock (Water): Our main goal is growing and diversifying the subcommittee and supporting the Water Department's work towards sustainability. Laurie has been compiling a list of potential members who are professors or other water professionals in the area.
- Tina Lieberman (Zero Waste): the Zero Waste Committee staffed several events since May, from Corporate Challenge Race to Pride, to provide guidance and support for recycling and composting to attendees. An event is coming with a staff person from the Institute for Local Self-Reliance and improving Solid Waste Management in municipalities. Saturday, November 16, 10 am to 4 pm, the Renewable Energy and Sustainable Living Fair will be held at the Sage Armory. Tina urges us to staff a table. The City has received a \$250,000 grant from NY DEC for food waste reduction and composting. The grant requires a partial match from the City.

6. Draft letter to Common Council regarding higher density development in relation to the Albany 2030 Plan and the Unified Sustainable Development Ordinance (USDO) - P.

Sheehan recused himself based on previous formal communication regarding proposal at 563 New Scotland Ave/301, 313, 315 and 319 S. Allen St. Sandy led the discussion. Dan Kirk-Davidoff recommended striking the sentence “In recent weeks, some members of our community have expressed concerns about the City’s USDO and higher density development proposals. They have relied on myths and not facts to make their points.” Ewa suggests publishing the letter with one of the local papers. Ewa suggests that we present this during the public comment session of the next Common Council meeting. The motion failed with five votes in favor, and many abstentions.

6. Adjournment: the meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm. Next meeting is Thursday, December 5.

*Minutes prepared by Daniel Kirk-Davidoff.*