

SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

Event Notes: March 4, 2021

Attending: Tina Lieberman (Chair), Daniel Kirk-Davidoff (Secretary), Jason West (Energy Manager, also representing Chris Spencer, Planning), Lauren Alpert (Planning & Development), Randy Milano (Engineering), Ewa Sobczynska (Outreach), Scott Kellogg (Urban Ag), Hyde Clarke, Gabriella Cebada Mora (Water), Bill Trudeau (Traffic Engineer)

Absent: Frank Zeoli (DGS), Pete Sheehan (Energy), Joe Coffey, Andre Lake (Environmental Equity)

1. Regular Business

- Tina Lieberman opened the event at 6:03 pm.

2. Approve minutes from Feb 4: Moved and Seconded and approved.

Public Comments. We received a comment from Shadi Khadivi, former member of the SAC:

As a previous board member of the SAC, I'm writing to the Sustainability Advisory Committee directly to discuss the impacts of Capital Lights in the Park.

Per the City of Albany's resolution 51.52.09R Executive Order No. 422-09: *has pledged to combat climate change and take action to adopt more sustainable practices by becoming a "Climate Smart Community."* The City of Albany Common Council believes that the social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainability are key to the successful implementation of the Albany 2030 Plan.

I am particularly inspired by points A and E written below from [Ordinance 42-1:](#)

A. Study and recommend methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase energy efficiency, and renewable energy production, conserve water, reduce waste, and employ environmentally responsible products.

E. Make recommendations as necessary and appropriate to the Mayor and the Common Council to effectuate the goals and purposes of this Part.

In looking at the Ordinance 42-1, I'm concerned about the following:

1. Does a car centric event that restricts pedestrian activity in a public park for about 3+ months in the City of Albany line up with the mission of being a climate smart community? (While the event actually happens before Thanksgiving and ends around January 3, the set up often begins in October and dismantles around January 16th)
2. Does an event that attracts over 100,000+ visitors via car in under a month promote the mission of a climate smart community reducing greenhouse emission?

3. Lastly, one particular statistic that struck me was that 1 in 4 residents in the City of Albany do not have cars. We have to ask ourselves, who is this event for especially when it costs at minimum \$25.00 a car? Here is a link on their website that breaks down the event: <http://albanycapitalholidaylights.com/hours-pricing/>

I'm reaching out to the SAC to see if you would be willing to discuss this further in light of the City of Albany's efforts to reduce greenhouse emissions. While the event is successful and nostalgic many, it does shed light on and call into question the car centric event in a city that is working towards reducing greenhouse emissions.

We will invite Shadi to have a conversation with a subgroup of the SAC to discuss possible responses.

3. New business

- (40 min) Presentation On Becoming a Clean Energy Community from the Sustainability Team at the Regional Planning Commission by Jill Henck. Very informative presentation and an enthusiastic reception with many questions.
- (15 minutes) Jason West presenting on the Climate Smart Communities program, and which actions we might take. There are many options- we could keep ourselves busy for years. Jason is working to categorize options by feasibility. Jason requests help with this work from folks on the SAC who have any time during the week. We need to resubmit some things to get back to Bronze and ideally to Silver level certification.

He'll focus on actions we could take in the next 6 months, so that we can complete the certification by the end of the year.

- Reminder: Saturday March 6, the Renewable Energy and Sustainable Living virtual fair. <https://caseonline.org/virtual-green-fair-2021/>
 - Reminder: Tuesday April 20, 7 pm: Panel Discussion organized by SAC volunteer: EV Living in The Capital District – What's Happening Now & What's Coming Next. (Drive Electric Earth Day event)
 - Reminder: Future of Small Cities campaign is having a terrific-looking Sustainable Futures Conference, April 27-30. Jason is presenting, Mayor Sheehan is ~~de~~giving ~~the~~ [the keynote welcome speech on day 3](https://www.futureofsmallcities.org/events/sustainable-futures-conference).
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 - SUNY interns: we've got four working with SAC and one working with the City.
 - Sustainable Albany Flyer with QR code for tabling events. Ewa, Gaby & interns are working on this.
 - By-laws changes: Tina's still working on revisions and edits of Jason's work. Aiming to get these mailed out and approved at the next meeting, so that we can get on the new (monthly) schedule asap without need for "special meetings."
 - Update on Mayor's Letter to CAC, drafted by Energy Subcommittee. Sent with a cover letter signed by the Mayor to the Climate Action Council.
 - Tabling to start at South End Night Market in April:
<https://www.facebook.com/SouthEndNightMarket>
 - Ewa raises point that big (and great) waste reduction effort announcement from DGS was an unexpected development to SAC, we only heard about it from Facebook. Would be great for SAC to be able to help out with publicity, for example.
4. Adjournment: event ended at 7:30 pm. ~~Next SAC meeting is Thursday, February 4 2021, at 6 pm, probably by Zoom.~~ Next meeting is April 1, 2021 [probably by Zoom](#).

Minutes prepared by Daniel Kirk-Davidoff, March 4, 2021