



SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

Meeting Minutes: Thursday, February 1, 2018

Present: Sandy Misiewicz, Frank Zeoli, Lauren Alpert, Scott Kellogg, Pete Sheehan, Allison Bradley, Jillian Kasow, Ewa Sobczynska, Laurie Wheelock, Joe Coffey, Bill Trudeau, Chris Spencer, Randy Milano, David Galin

Absent-Kevin Luteran

Observer: Said Ibrahim (Corporation Counsel, City of Albany)

- **Regular Business:**

- Jillian Kasow called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
- There are currently 3 Common Council vacancies that need to be filled.
- Jill Kasow moved to adopt meeting minutes from December 20, 2017; these were approved with a small edit; on page 3 the word should read as “autonomous” vehicles not automatic. The SAC members all voted in favor.
- There were no members of public present and therefore no public comment period. Ewa Sobczynska asked that the City of Albany Sustainability website is updated with new meeting dates, updated members’ names.

- **MOE&S Activities:**

- Kevin Luteran could not attend the meeting so Lauren offered an update on his behalf.
- Race to the top grants submitted December 14, 2017 and are now awaiting approval
- 1.8 megawatts of solar have been achieved (of the 10 megawatts planned to be installed)
- The City is preparing to purchase the street lights
- Would like to have research done on revolving energy fund for the City
 1. Wrote a memo on it- Lauren Alpert will share with the group
 2. Looking for help researching this topic
- David Galin
 1. 3 SAC seats are still open. David will reach out to the Common Council to get the contacts for new appointments.

- **New Business:**

- **Elections for all officer positions: Chair, Vice-Chair, and Co-Secretaries:**

- Chair- Ewa Sobczynska nominated Jill Kasow
 1. Pete Sheehan seconded



2. Vote was unanimous
 - Vice Chair- Jill Kasow nominates Pete Sheehan as Vice Chair
 1. Vote was unanimous
 - Recording Secretaries- minutes
 1. Ewa Sobczynska and Laurie Wheelock agreed to the positions
 2. Vote was unanimous
- **Discussion on City goals and structure of future meetings**
- Jill Kasow shared ideas for changing the committee meeting room and structure of the SAC to be more comfortable forum. Using the Mayor's Conference room or the multi-purpose room on the 3rd floor could allow everyone to sit in more a circle than formal table. Jill also made the recommendation that having the Commissioners and Department Heads share issue areas before the meetings would help generate discussion. Jill Kasow also suggested setting up speakers or training sessions on different topics for SAC.
- Jill Kasow proposed that the next meeting be on climate goals because the language is vague.
- The City of Albany has previously signed on to the Compact of Mayors (committing the City to the Paris Climate Accord and adopting its climate agreement goals (<http://climatemayors.org>; <http://www.albanysustainability.org/news-events/87-city-of-albany-joins-the-compact-of-mayors>).
- David Galin suggested that the next meeting could be an opportunity to set expectations and define goals for the City to reach. The SAC then discussed and brainstormed how to go about setting goals for each of the sustainability plans the City is trying to hit targets.
- Ewa Sobczynska suggested basing this discussion on the already existing [Albany 2030 Climate Action plan](#), outlining actions that could be undertaken by the City to further lower its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Since the plan lays out concrete actions that can be undertaken by City departments (water, transportation, etc. sectors), the plan can serve as a foundation and an inventory to discuss what the different City departments are already doing, measure progress achieved and see what else could be implemented. Included in the plan is 2009 baseline inventory of GHG emissions by sector.
- Lauren Alpert added that Kevin Luteran had metrics when it came to energy consumption for all of the municipal buildings, etc.
- Joe Coffey added that the Water Department has been coming up with strategies for how to establish a baseline for GHG for their department. Joe Coffey went on to say that to achieve zero carbon one needs a baseline to start.
- Frank Zeoli is working to track the DGS's fuel consumption. Specifically, trying to generate an excel document that will track city vehicles. The system will have its limits but he is working on making this happen.



- Sandy Misiewicz and Ewa Sobczynska both voiced that some preparation needs to take place before the next meeting so that the SAC can determine where the City is now and how far we need to go to reach the different goals set by the climate agreements. Jill Kasow said that she will put together an email with links to new dropbox folder where both agreements will be located as well as the agenda. There was some discussion about using the 2030 agreement as the base and melding together the other agreements to create the City's long/short term goals and targets.
- **Commissioner Projects – an opportunity for Commissioners to discuss priorities for SAC input**
- Joe Coffey, Commissioner, Department of Water and Water Supply
 - Previously, Joe sent around a one-pager and made the recommendation to the book “Scaling up” Verne Harnish- mastering the Rockefeller projects. Joe used it as a way to assemble and report the Water Department's business plan. He now uses it for goal sharing.
 - Joe discussed the lead pipe service line replacement program and how the City joined a call with other Cities and DOH to discuss how to implement and administer the grants.
- Bill Trudeau - raised concerns about the autonomous vehicle and how costs to the municipalities would be huge if they had to implement the siting, traffic signage etc. that would be needed. He also shared privacy concerns and the need to prevent City data from being hacked. Jill Kasow and Allison Bradley mentioned how this could be a good topic for a training session. They would likely be able to find a speaker and materials for guidance.
- Bill Trudeau also raised the need to create public educational materials for new traffic signals that will be installed within the City. A “flashing yellow arrow” will be installed to allow left turns to “proceed with caution” when there is a yellow flashing light. Pete Sheehan mentioned that the City of Cohoes has these installed now.
- Jill Kasow raised a new potential green infrastructure topic - the need to create a green infrastructure tool kit with examples of “best practices” to help municipalities. Joe Coffey agreed that such a tool kit could help with designs for storm water projects, drainage issues and long term aspects. Specifically, Joe raised how the galleries on Melrose have significant storm water retention and how the Water Department is trying to work with Randy to tie into street projects to do storm water separation at the same time. This type of coordination is needed to know when streets get done ahead of time.
- Lauren Alpert discussed interest to improve bicycle counts. In the past the counts were done by volunteers placed at various intersections. Lauren is wondering whether there are better ways to track and collect data. Lauren also announced



that the City of Albany was awarded two brownfield grants; one in the South End and one in the Warehouse district.

- Joe Coffey provided additional details about the lead pipe replacement program. Albany's plan for the grant funding will involve multiple elements: look at which streets the City is already planning to pave; target older homes for instance, those in the lower wards are where some of the older houses in the City can be located. The City is also considering whether to use a contractor to complete an entire ward or block (500-1000 lines at a time). The lead pipes will be replaced with copper not plastic pipes. Pete Sheehan asked what exactly is being replaced. Joe clarified that it is the drinking water line from the house into the meter. Scott Kellogg asked how the financing would work. Joe explained that it could be reimbursement of the homeowner or the water board providing the financing (and then getting reimbursed) depending on who does the work.
 - Joe also discussed a presentation the Water Department gave to the Nature Conservancy in January where they spoke about the recently launched project to purchase carbon credits.
 - Joe also spoke about the long term control plan for the Beaver Creek disinfection. He presented it to the Mayor that morning and is working on messaging. The plan is to begin public outreach in early March.
 - Joe is also working with SUNY Albany Graduate students on sustainability. One area SAC could assist the Water Department is whether a program could be created for watershed improvement along the creek and reservoir. There are currently high levels of phosphorous in the water. NYC has a revolving program to help address these issues. Maybe the City of Albany could also create a program to help fund replacement of failing septic tanks and methods for preventing agriculture waste from entering the stream. Allison added that a target was placed on the state level recently to address these types of systems and how SAC could look to that program to help implement something similar for the City of Albany. Jill Kasow added that a change in the law may be necessary for the lead pipe replacement grant funds to a contractor if a homebuyer cannot do it.
- **Committee updates**
 - **Energy Subcommittee (Pete Sheehan)**
 - LED street lighting project is in its formal state. At first, National Grid had presented a price to the City to outright purchase the lights but it was very high. There is now a joint proposal with the net value of the lights. The City responded to PSC today.
 - Pete Sheehan also provided an update on Eco village (Sheridan Hollow). Susan Cottner from the Albany Housing Partnership is closing on the grant, which is a partnership with NYSERDA for the installation of solar panels and other energy improvements in the neighborhood.



- Pete Sheehan also said that about 6 members of the subcommittee plan on meeting with the new Albany School District Superintendent to discuss coming into the middle and high school classes to discuss sustainability.
- Pete Sheehan also discussed movement towards the Community Choice Aggregation option. The Department of Public Service is allowing municipalities to band together and chose an energy service provider. This is an opt-out program which allows each homeowner to decide. There are a few communities including Westchester that have done this. Pete Sheehan said that he would get more information on the option to Lauren who would share it with SAC.
- **Outreach Subcommittee (Ewa Sobczynska)**
 - Ewa is trying to increase the amount of Facebook posts from the SAC page and encouraged everyone to like the content. She also offered to highlight the work each department.
 - Allison offered to help with the twitter account (sustainable518 - <https://twitter.com/sustainable518>).
- Joe Coffey wanted to share with the group that a competition amongst local middle schoolers called the “Capital District Future City Competition” took place recently. Students had to use recycled materials and collaborate with mentors to create their designs. AWD staff participated in judging the competition.
- **Action Items/ Discussion of next meeting on April 5th**
 - For the next meeting: Jill Kasow will send an outline and guiding documents via email for the working group. David Galin will secure new room. Further research will be needed prior to the next meeting.
 - Earth Day—the City of Albany will be holding a press conference and is open to ideas to highlight sustainability. Any ideas can be shared with David Galin.
- **Adjournment**

Minutes by Laurie Wheelock