

SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

Meeting Minutes: Thursday, June 6, 2018

Attending: Peter Sheehan (Acting Chair), Joe Coffey, Ewa Sobczynska (Secretary), Kevin Luteran, Randy Milano, Lauren Alpert, Allison Bradley, Laurie Wheelock, Scott Kellogg, Sandy Misiewicz, Frank Zeoli, Bill Trudeau, Andre Lake, Tina Lieberman, Daniel Kirk-Davidof

Laura Travison & Zach Powell (support from City Planning)

Absent: Jill Kasow (Chair), Chris Spencer, R. Milano and Lauren Alpert.

Minutes prepared by: Ewa Sobczynska and Laurie Wheelock

1. Regular Business

- Pete Sheehan welcomed new members of the SAC: Tina, Andre and Daniel. The 3 new members introduced themselves to the Committee. Tina Lieberman has been an advocate on environmental issues with United for Safe Energy, Sierra Club and other grass-roots level organizations; she has organized Earth Day Expo in 2016. She's particularly interested in educational opportunities around sustainability. Andre Lake is a solar and renewable energy expert and regularly participates in local events and activities around these issues. Daniel Kirk-Davidof is a scientist focused on renewables and forecasting with particular interest in watershed issues and urban planning.
- SAC members voted to officially approve February 2018 minutes (Pete proposed, Joe and Ewa seconded). April minutes have been filed but will not be formally approved as there was no quorum during the meeting.
- Public comment period – There were around 5-7 people from the public. One person introduced themselves (Michelle Rogat, SUNY Albany Graduate Student of Planning, recent graduate and currently project manager in regards to portable housing and solar project).

2. New Business

- SAC bi-annual report – Ewa Sobczynska suggested that the SAC puts together the Annual Report for the past 2 years. While there hasn't been much activity (due to low membership and diminished activity of the Sub-Committees), it is important to document what the Committee has been involved with over the past 2 years. The reporting period would be July 2016 – June 2018. Ewa will send a template to the Sub-Committees Chairs to fill out with the deadline of July 7th.

3. Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) Presentation by Tina Lieberman

- Tina Lieberman gave a short presentation on the CCA and its potential for giving Albany residents opportunity to participate in renewable energy market for

electricity needs ([see PPT on Dropbox](#)). Tina explained what the CCA program is and how it could be used to help the City of Albany lower electricity costs. The CCA is a “buyers club for electricity” where localities can buy electricity in bulk for a discount. The Public Service Commission (PSC) started allowing this program to be used in 2016.

- Residents and businesses can both acquire the electricity. Tina explained how the program works when someone looks at their electric bill. The key is the difference between delivery and supply, the two portions of a person’s bill. Delivery: must come from National grid (guaranteed by PSC, wire and pole maintenance). Default supplier: this is where we are allowed to choose a supplier and Albany can supply residents of Albany by the electric company of their choosing. There is a requirement that the locality have at least 40,000 households. The City of Albany has 41,000 so we are eligible on our own for the program. The Common Council would need to pass a resolution for the City to proceed.
- There’s now a resolution in front of the Common Council (Council Member Cathy Fahey sponsored it) that encourage the City to investigate and research this opportunity on behalf of Albany residents.
- There is a CCA Steering Committee with supporters, stakeholders and committee members. Their next meeting is Tuesday June 12, from 5:30-7:30 at First Unitarian Church. There will also be a meeting with the Common Council, NYSERDA and the Planning Commission on Wednesday June 13

4. Commissioner updates –

Joe Coffey- Water Department

- Primary sustainability project- the Nature Conservancy and Albany’s Alcove Reservoir. The Water Department is working with Mohawk Land Conservancy for an easement. They also sold carbon credits and are currently waiting for the easement so they can release the official announcement.
- Beaver Creek Clean Creek- the City is preparing to have a drone fly over the ravine. The Water Department is also putting together a charrette to include an expanded nature for the proposed learning garden in Lincoln Park.
- **Bill Trudeau- Traffic**
 - Phase 2 of the Madison Avenue calming project has been completed. Last summer the Department started work from Partridge Street to Lark Street. They began work again in April 2018. Now all of the new sidewalks have

been added and traffic signals have been installed. The Federal government supplied approximately \$2.4 million for the work. The City paid the sidewalk portion

- The City of Albany still offers a tree program. If interested, residents can call DGS for more information regarding the 50/50 street/tree program. The tree plantings take place during the fall.
- Ewa Sobczynska asked if there are any other bike lanes being proposed. Sandy Misiewicz informed the group that CDTA is studying Washington Ave and that there will be public engagement once the study is completed.
- There was also a question about whether there are any plans to install EV charging stations. CDTA is looking to install them mostly in public parking garages. However, they are looking into options for on the street parkers.

Frank Zeoli- Department of General Services

- The Department had its final recycling roll out with the new carts. There are a few streets here and there that the Department did not originally think could be part of the program that has been added. There were 6,000 carts deployed during the last round bringing the total to 13,000. The Department is also looking at possibly starting a pilot program for trash cans.
- New Summer Youth Education Program- The Department will be hiring youth to go door to door in the south end and west hill. There have been 2,000 properties identified. Youth will go out 5 times a week asking questions to gather data: do you recycle, do you have a bin etc. There will also be questions relating to the Water Department and Storm Water Management. The teams will have brochures to offer residents on how a variety of topics including how to reduce, reuse recycle. The data collected will be used by the Department to help target future efforts.
- Tina also highlighted for the group the upcoming Jazz Festival, scheduled for Saturday Sept 8th, will be a “zero waste” event. Not only will recycling containers be provided for the event but the City will be collecting food scraps for composting purposes (Food Scraps 360). The jazz festival is looking for volunteers to help manage the event.
- There were also public questions about whether Albany would be impacted financially by where it will be sending its recycling. Frank Zeoli explained that the City was getting \$65 a ton for its recycling in 2011. The market tanked in 2017 and with the City negotiating the new price the initial proposal was for \$150,000- \$200,000 a year. In the end the City negotiated and received a deal where we are not making or having to pay for the materials to be taken away.

5. Committee updates-

1) Pete Sheehan- Energy

- Members of the Energy Committee met with Albany Superintendent of Schools. The purpose of the meeting was to bring expertise of the

members to the middle/high school sustainability. 6-7 members of the committee presenting in Albany HS and middle schools, speak with classes. In August the group plans to speak with STEM coordinators in the schools to find ways to fit them into the curriculum. The schools are also interested in finding ways to incorporate waste issues, recycling and composting. The programs will start in fall and spring.

2) **Ewa Sobczynska- Outreach**

- Lauren Alpert and Ewa Sobczynska met with the SUNY Albany Sustainability Office. The University has had an energy efficiency program for the last 10 years. However, they are exploring other options including purchasing solar. The University's Sustainability office also does outreach and engages with the students. The campus even has its own bike and car share program.
- SUNY Albany also offers a Business Program called the G3 (Going Green Globally). Two projects have been done with the City's Water Department.
- Joe Coffey added that the Water Department has been in communication with TOAST Elementary school regarding the ecology/learning garden. The Water Department has a "Beaver Creek" project page on the City's website which includes the preliminary designs. This information can also be found through the Water Board's website. The Water Department is also adding to their list serve so that they can communicate with residents regarding the project.
- Ewa Sobczynska concluded by adding that the Outreach committee would be meeting in June.

3) **Sandy Misciewicz- Transportation**

- The Committee is organizing a July meeting. Sandy also mentioned that CDTA has a study out for public comment on South Pearl Street's truck traffic. The document is up for public review and comment through the City's website. The report helped determine where trucks are originating from using license plate readers. It was concluded that a great number of commercial/businesses in the City are using South Pearl Street to get to and from 787. The report also includes several strategies for consideration including how to encourage drivers to use low emission vehicles. The Department will also be reviewing and summarizing comments.
- Joe Coffey made the recommendation that trucks be required to drive through Port Road rather than South Pearl Street. Bill Trudeau added that DGS has geo-fencing up that alerts the City if one of their trucks uses South Pearl (which they are not allowed to use unless they have business down there).
- Sandy Misciewicz also discussed CDTA's bus fleet, which is currently not using EV vehicles but instead diesel. CDTA is currently looking into doing an EV vehicle pilot program.

4) Scott Kellogg-

- The floating wetland in island creek park will be launched in mid-July launch. The structure will remediate sewage overflows and offer educational opportunities. The dock is currently located at the Radix Center where the plants are growing. It will be moved down to the water in July. The dock will include a variety of plants including cattails, rushes etc. Professors at Sienna College have already agreed to assist with determining how to measure analytical results.

6. New sub-committee chairs (Land Use, Water, other)- Pete Sheehan opened up a discussion about finding chairs for the land use and water committees. There was also discussion about whether or not to create new committees.

7. Action Items/ Discussion of next meeting on Thursday, August 2, 2018

- **Increased Energy Efficiently Codes/Measurers for New Residential and Commercial Development.** In August Chris Spencer will discuss residential conservation ordinances. Tax breaks and credits will be offered to make energy upgrades when a house is sold or transferred. Possible eligible upgrades include energy efficiency development, increasing the minimum height by one story, changing the roof's color, off site flow etc. Currently, there is a focus on South Allen Street.

*The next SAC meeting will be August 2. Both Ewa Sobczynska and Laurie Wheelock indicated that they would be unable to attend.

8.Adjournment