



## **SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)**

Meeting Minutes: Thursday, December 6, 2018

Attending: Peter Sheehan (Chair), Tina Lieberman (Vice Chair), Daniel Kirk-Davidoff (Secretary), Ewa Sobczynska, Scott Kellogg, Laurie Wheelock, Andre Lake, Angelica Kang (City of Albany Corporation Counsel's office), Andre Lake, Frank Zeoli (DGS), Bill Trudeau (Traffic Engineering), Allison Bradley, Joe Coffey (Water Dept. ), Sandy Misiewicz

Absent: Chris Spencer, Randy Milano, Lauren Alpert (Planning Dept.)

Guests: Cathy Fahey, (Albany Common Council)

### 1. Regular Business

- Pete Sheehan called the meeting to order.
- October Minutes Approval: Minutes approved as amended.
- Public comment period (about 7 members of public were present):
  - Malcolm Blitz, 36 Summit Ave, Albany. Member of Solarize Albany and Sierra Club. He noted the dire increase in global greenhouse gas emissions as detailed in the recently-released report from the IPCC. Advocated for NYS's community solar program as a response to the global problem. Monday, NYSERDA announced Solar-For-All program. Malcolm's request to the Albany SAC - to help address the lack of awareness and assist in the adoption of community solar and Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) by City of Albany residents. He would like to see the SAC adopt a course of action to encourage residents to sign on.
  - Jeff Corbin, Niskayuna resident. Attended this SAC meeting to support Community Choice Aggregation and remind the audience that it's not too late to do so. According to Jeff outside of federal carbon policy, the best thing we can do to reduce carbon emissions is to support Community Choice Aggregation. The Town of Niskayuna has already adopted an expression of interest. The action being contemplated by the City of Albany (see below) is a very early step, expression of interest, and there's still a long way to go in the process which will eventually lead to the City reviewing contract offers. Municipalities within Westchester County are now participating in CCA., with other communities in process including Ithaca and others in the Mid-Hudson Valley.
  - Tara Donadio is also supporting Community Choice Aggregation and presented information at this meeting (see below.)

### 2. New business



- Climate Smart Communities, Tara Donadio is the Clean Energy Communities Coordinator for the Capital District Regional Planning Commission. Ms. Donadio walked through the scoring system for the [Climate Smart Communities](#) program. The City of Albany needs 120 points for Bronze and 300 for Silver. Deadline for recertification is July 1, 2019. Pete Sheehan and Tara will discuss some of these processes with Lauren Alpert and keep the SAC apprised. A CO<sub>2</sub> inventory of government operations is underway, which would count as 16 points towards the 2019 recertification. Also in consideration (for another 16 points) is a community CO<sub>2</sub> inventory.

Ewa inquired as to how Tara and Lauren were envisioning the involvement of the subcommittees? Tara and team have put together a CSC Assignment summary spreadsheet that allocates tasks to our subcommittees. Much of the work falls to the Energy Subcommittee.

Ewa asked whether the Albany 2030 climate action plan will still be valid as a vulnerability assessment for some of these requirements? Tara says, since it was put together recently (2013), it would still be valid. Lauren will be shepherding this process and will give us (SAC members) assignments. Ewa suggests we set up working meetings for purpose of organizing the tasks towards the recertification. Pete will get in touch with Lauren about this.

Review of spreadsheet (attached to minutes). Color-coding: orange has already been accomplished by the city, blue seems to be underway, black, not yet begun. SAC is assumed to be the “CSC task force.” The City being a member of Clean Energy Communities gets it credit for joining a National/Regional Climate Program. Another open question is whether we need to update the Climate Action Plan.

There is also a section on decreasing energy use and the makeup of the transportation fleet inventory which may provide credit and might be in progress. Converting street lights to LEDs gets 5 points, but probably won’t be complete by July 1. Converting traffic lights to LED may be complete, would provide the City 1 point. The Solar energy installation in Swinburne Park has been completed and provides 9 points. Climate-smart materials management and recycling at public events program provides points. Complete streets policy and implementing complete streets policy also gets points.

Other categories include: [Enhancing community resilience](#): there are points for a climate vulnerability assessment, but it’s not clear if there are points for that in the resubmission; [Floodplain restoration./other water projects](#) in progress may qualify for points; [Empire State Plaza farmers’ market](#) may qualify for points, since there’s a city employee who supports it and attends; [Solar redevelopment of a brownfield](#) should provide points; [Informing and Inspiring the Public](#): City can get credit for the SAC website. [Public education sponsored by City](#) (earth day events, etc.) may provide points. [Performance-tracking gets points](#)- but there is much work to be done; [Innovation](#)- things not already on the list might qualify for points- CCA might count; [Bikeshare](#) could qualify for transportation points. Tara thinks the City has about 157



points at present and the challenge will be documentation. Performance: reduced waste volumes from Government Operations (e.g. recycling).

### 3. Commissioner updates

- Joe Coffey - Anecdotes: reviewing telemetry data on trunk sewers, lot of water flowing without much rain or snow-melt. What's going on? Some of the outflows have no tide-gates or ones that don't close adequately. He's reading Jeff Goodell's book *The Water Will Come*. The City is not as vulnerable as Norfolk or Miami Beach, but two feet of sea level rise over the next century will have implications for sewage system. The Department is looking at projects to increase storage to keep water from streets, basements and Beaver Creek. Core value of sustainability in water department; they're incorporating some grey or green infrastructure in every project they undertake. Ramsey Place bioswales project is getting a lot of local push-back. Joe is talking with the Times Union, and WAMC reporters to try to get a balanced picture out to the community and wants help getting the message out from the SAC. The WAMC article can be viewed: [here](#) and at <https://www.wamc.org/post/proposed-bioswale-rankles-albany-neighborhood>
- Sum-up: There is a need to adjust our infrastructure now, before we get two feet of sea-level rise and increased episodic downfalls. Ewa suggested bringing outside people in for presentations, but Joe was dubious about how helpful that is. One of the goals is to get the message out about the need for water improvements broadly, in advance of big projects, so people are primed to support them when a project arrives at a given neighborhood. Ewa pointed out very nice write-ups of Lincoln Park meeting in *All Over Albany*, and wondered if the local residents had been involved and Joe responded in the affirmative.
- Also, the Nature Conservancy project is moving forward. The Common Council has moved the transfer ahead for the conservation easement. Carbon credits have been sold and the announcement will be made soon.
- Frank Zeoli - There is an effort in place to improve efficiency of recycling removal routes by minimizing distance traveled. Frank and his staff are working on having that in place by the summer. DGS is starting to plan an Earth Day event for next year. Ewa asked about a summary of tonnage numbers for recycling? Frank stated yes, for 2017, but it takes a little while to compile them.
- Bill Trudeau - A number of intersections are slated for improvement for both vehicles and pedestrians with a \$1-\$1.5 million budget for these improvements. Consultant selection will begin in the spring of 2019 for pedestrian improvements on Henry Johnson Corridor (both intersections and in between). Construction will start in 2020. Ewa complimented the Lark/Washington redesign and especially likes the mid-street crosswalk by the Library which is Visually clean and modern.



#### 4. Committee updates

- Tina (Zero-waste education subcommittee) is working on the 80% DEC food-waste reduction grant program and putting together a grant application with DGS (municipality needs to submit). She questioned if it is necessary to lay out money up front. This should be avoided and will have to talk to DEC about it. It is a great opportunity - being a three year grant. Routed through Radix, it could fund 1½ FTE equivalent positions to increase composting at Radix, including accepting compost from restaurants and community drop-offs (as a free service). It represents great possibilities if they can meet the grant deadline of March 1 (2019.) Tina also talked with the facilities manager of the Albany School District (Brian Dengler) and he got a tour of the Bethlehem Middle School, where they have a big recycling/composting program. Mr. Dengler was quite impressed and thought it could be done at little/no cost to the school system. He will put a proposal together to the Board of Education. One possibility would be to put in a commercial composting system in the back of the High School, but the he thought they might start with a younger-age school.
- Sandy Misiewicz: Described the recent Transportation Subcommittee meeting where the issues of how to get more charging stations on streets with no off-street parking and determining where people who own EVs currently charge now. Sandy wants to develop a survey to address some of these questions such as what would be required by the city to get more charge stations installed. The related issues of transportation safety and road safety also came up. Education is necessary on safety issues, and best practices literature needs to be distributed.
- Other questions raised including: What do the green stripes mean on Madison Avenue? What are the pedestrian signals that flash at you at St. Peters? How do we get information to residents effectively? Can we reach out to the Valley Cats to hand out information along with game tickets? Sandy will put together an inventory about what the City's already doing on this including actions by the Police Athletic League, and Police Department, then brainstorm some more about how to disseminate information. There is lots going on - community meetings on Washington Corridor, Bikepath extensions, etc. **News:** Complete Streets coordinator position for the city has been filled- John Deruger.
- Energy Subcommittee: Pete Sheehan. Susan Cotner of the Affordable Housing Partnership is working with NYSERDA on its recently received grant for rooftop solar, energy efficiency upgrades, LED parking light enhancements and EV charging stations in Sheridan Hollow. Regarding Green infrastructure, the LED streetlight conversion and possible purchase is in play with the City just approving \$29 million in bonding for NYPA to implement purchase of streetlights. The subcommittee just met with National Grid to understand their proposals (outright purchase vs. National Grid converting to LEDs), and providing the City with significant energy and dollar savings. Kevin Luteran from NYPA will meet with the subcommittee to run through the numbers on their proposal. The Committee is also working through the Climate Smart Communities application discussed above. NYSERDA is working on a Stretch



Code which is a building efficiency code, that could then be incorporated into our building code for new buildings and substantial rehabilitations. The City Energy Manager position has not yet been posted, but should be soon.

- Water: Laurie Wheelock - Sub-Committee had a meeting with Joe Coffey in attendance. Anticipated is outreach to SUNY Albany for interns and help with planning. Joe emphasized need for help and advice on long-term planning questions and reviewing Water Department projects for next few years.
  - Outreach: Ewa Sobczynska. Held a working meeting focusing on setting up meetings with Neighborhood Associations, and also on a slide presentation to support this outreach, and a survey to get input on their interests and level of familiarity with sustainability activities in the City.
5. Approval of letters to Common Council and Mayor on Community Choice Aggregation submitted by Tina Lieberman . Letters will be attached to these minutes. Tina's discussion emphasized the very large ratio of Albany residential and commercial electricity use to municipal use. Joe Coffey moves that we accept the letters and send them to their recipients in physical and electronic form. Pete Sheehan seconded, and the motion passed, 10 votes in favor, 0 against.
  6. Two-year activity report. Discussion ensued about whether the subcommittee activities in the appendix have been updated. It appears that they have not all been updated, so it was decided to table the report approval to the February, 2019 meeting. Pete will circulate the present version, subcommittee heads should update activities in Appendices 3 & 4.
  7. Action Items/ Discussion of next meeting on Thursday February 7, 2019
    - February meeting agenda items: Approval of two-year report. Other items to be submitted.
  8. Adjournment: meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

*Minutes prepared by Daniel Kirk-Davidoff*

*December 10, 2018*