

Notes

CSCTF Meeting, 5/7/23

Attending: Colleen Lutz, Suzan Flamm, Derek Porter, Cathy Redlich and Jeff Mousseau

Projects that are Currently in Progress

a. Town Garage Solar Update

Suzan reported that the Strategic Investment Committee (SIC) continues to support a solar installation at the town garage or other suitable site. The goal is to cover the municipality's electricity usage with solar. About a year ago Suzan obtained a proposal from Solar Generation, a contractor, for an installation on the town salt shed. At the time, she was unable to obtain any additional proposals. The town board then requested that, as a first step, an engineer evaluate the project. Suzan obtained a proposal from a solar engineer at CT Male, an engineering firm. The town board would like two additional engineering proposals. Suzan spoke with two other firms, CPL and Laberge. Both indicated interest but have not sent proposals. Derek volunteered to speak to SIC and explain why an engineer's analysis is not necessary; solar contractors are capable of evaluating structures, electricity usage and government/utility incentives. Colleen added that NYSERDA concurred and would not fund an engineer's evaluation with a grant. Suzan noted that since the project was stalled, it might not be a good idea to use it as the basis of the next NYSERDA grant proposal which is due in about a month. She will reach out again to the two engineering firms, CPL and Laberge.

b. Climate Vulnerability Assessment

Colleen reported that Cornell Cooperative Extension was preparing a Climate Vulnerability Assessment for Columbia County and has also offered to prepare the Assessments for individual towns within the County. Ancram accepted. As a first step, Colleen has provided a list to Cornell of individuals within the county that have relevant information.

c. Solarize Campaign #2

Solstice has offered to run another solarize campaign, offering the same terms as the first campaign – 10% off on utility bills, a \$100 gift certificate to every subscriber, and \$100 to the town for each subscriber. The committee was in favor, but noted that there were some issues with the first campaign around expectations of a single bill, combining Solstice and Central Hudson charges, and also around the gift certificates which were difficult to use. Colleen noted that an “opt-out” approach to community solar is not yet available.

d. NYSERDA Grant

Colleen and Joe are looking into the possibility of applying to NYSERDA for a \$15,000 grant to buy and install EV chargers at a local business or businesses, such as The Farmer's Wife, The Pond, Little Store, the Ancram Opera House (AOH) and the Ancram Hotel. This would involve getting a Climate Mitigation Easement from the business. The Farmer's Wife and AOH are interested in learning more. The Town of Stillwater has done this. Joe or Colleen will reach out to the other businesses.

e. Clean Heating and Cooling and Energy Upgrades

The County launched a Clean Heating and Cooling Campaign. Ancram signed on to the campaign and will get points for qualifying energy upgrades purchased by Ancram residents, such as air source heat pumps. Colleen is planning a tabling event (using the Ancram's Bright Idea tent!) at the Gallatin Transfer Station on May 13th. Volunteers are needed. An email alert from Art would also help spread the word.

Resilient Gardening and Farming Group

Susan Arterian could not attend but submitted a written report, attached here. Suzan noted that the Gallatin Transfer Station is now not only accepting vegetable and fruit food scraps, but also meat and fish scraps.

Taconic Hills EV School Buses

The Taconic Hills School District received a \$3.9M grant for EV buses. Many Ancram residents are within this school district. The state has mandated EV buses by 202____. Anyone in this school district can vote on the district's budget, including the EV buses, on May 16th. There has been some pushback to this budget item. The grant will be lost if the budget is rejected. The committee suggested that Ancram alert residents about this important vote.