

MEETING MINUTES FOR NORTH TONAWANDA CLIMATE SMART TASK FORCE

Date: Wednesday, February 14, 2024

Attendees, In person @ City Hall:

Members: Austin Tylec, Tim Pieper, Emily Root, Deb Gondek, Erin Robinson, Jason Kulaszewski (University at Buffalo Regional Institute), Josh McClain (University at Buffalo Regional Institute)

Meeting called to order at 5:05 pm

AGENDA TOPICS:

1) **Approval of January meeting minutes**

Austin motion to accept; Erin 2nd. Carried.

2) **Solar Campaign**

a) Representatives joined to discuss community solar campaigns. Their program is opt-in and they offer 10% off utility bills for the duration of the project. Current capacity for 4,000 users with more projects coming online, and they have experience with successfully implementing campaigns. Billing still comes from National Grid (no dual-billing). Customers are free to cancel at any time (90-day written notice) with no cancellation fee.

b) Typically 5-20% of residents within municipalities sign up. Goal is to have at least 160 NT residents signed up after NYSERDA scoping document is approved to receive maximum amount of grant dollars for the city.

c) City representatives are assessing options such as the one discussed during the meeting before making decisions on a path forward. Mayor Tylec will update the group on the outcome of this assessment.

d) Erin volunteered to chair this sub-committee; Jason, Deb and Austin will serve as well.

3) **2024 Priorities & Volunteers for Sub-Committees**

a) Implement Climate Resiliency Plan

- Acquire Additional Funding to Support Climate Resilience: Leverage free technical assistance & grant funding for projects
- Upgrade Sewer Systems to Mitigate Flooding
- Promote Green Infrastructure on Public & Private Property
- Enhance Emergency Operations for Extreme Events
- Promote Sustainable Development and Protect Wetlands / Natural Areas
- Bolster Climate Awareness & Household Hazard Preparedness
- Help Property Owner Upgrade Structures to Mitigate Hazards

b) Provide input to City's LWRP & Comprehensive Plan (Austin, Tim, Mike, Emily)

- First meeting was held several weeks ago, discussed LWRP boundary.

c) Prioritize Source Water Protection Initiatives (Emily)

d) Advance Renewable Energy/Solar (Erin, Jason, Deb, Austin)

- Begin meeting in March to complete scoping document.

e) Review zoning recommendations for High Energy Use Overlay District (Deb)

- This will be discussed as part of the Comprehensive Plan process, and may be included as a recommendation in the final plan.

f) Outreach to NT residents via CSC Website, Social Media, and Educational Sessions to raise community awareness of issues and solutions

- Community solar and Comprehensive Plan engagement will be priorities in the first two quarters of the year.

4) **Updates on Projects & Opportunities**

- a) C&S Engineering Firm / retainer with NT (Austin)
 - a. Could potentially support grant writing, RFP, etc.
- b) Tour for CSC (Mustafa)
 - a. No updates.
- c) NYS Solid Waste Management Plan (Deb)
 - a. Expanded bottle bill is something we may promote in 2024, once it is passed.
- d) Fleet Inventory (Tim, Jason)
 - a. No updates.
- e) Source Water Protection Plan – Emily
 - a. No updates.
- f) Renewable Energy Initiatives – Erin
 - a. Discussed above in agenda item #2.

5) **Communications Strategy & Outreach**

- a) Annual Update to Common Council (to be scheduled in 2nd half of 2024)
- b) Hazard Preparedness/Residential Opportunities/Funding Sources for Homeowners
- c) Rain Barrel Program
- d) Solar Campaign (2nd Quarter 2024)
- e) Other ideas for 2024/timing

6) **Other Business**

- a) Potential new task force members: Austin will reach out to Botanical Gardens group.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05. Motion by Emily, second by Deb.

Next Meeting: March 13, 5pm @ City Hall.