

TOWN OF CHATHAM – CLIMATE SMART – ACTION TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES
6/23/20

in attendance: Kevin Weldon, Vance Pitkin, Abi Mesick, Donal Collins, Angus Eaton, Deborah Conrad, Karla Kavanaugh, John Cooley, Tara Donadio, Melissa Pollack

Abi- Had further conversations with the county waste department about how best to increase the amount of refuse that gets recycled. The conclusion is that there needs to be a grassroots effort to persuade area stores to persuade their suppliers to switch to disposables of the most recyclable/compostable materials. To that end, she'd like our committee to write a letter that can be officially endorsed by the Town Board. Donal would then present it to the County Board of Supervisors, in hopes of getting other towns in the county and the Board itself to do the same. Then the County can leverage that into a more effective push for change. Abi, Melissa and Karla agreed to work on a draft letter.

Angus -Questions for the Comp Plan survey need to be simplified and edited. He will re-send for our review. Karla would like questions about making the Town more bicycle friendly. She'd also like some questions to see if there's awareness among residents about the Stretch Code. Angus suggested that the Building Code Department needs training in Stretch Code so they're literate and able to educate those with proposals in front of them. Tara- Mike DeWine is a good contact point for this.

Abi - would like us to try to have an in-person meeting, recorded, outdoors while the weather allows.

Kevin - Hasn't gotten a reply to his request to NYPA to have them re-present the LED streetlight proposal to the current Town Board. Suggested he will present the information himself. It was also suggested that Kevin get in touch with Todd Schwindemann from Berne to see if we as a committee want to take a field trip to find out how the process has been for a community of similar size and type.

Angus - Per the Solar Siting Mapping Tool sub-committee suggestion, the developers of the tool have added elevation to the tool. The sub-committee has concluded that it'll be a useful tool in concert with other things as a means for Planning or Zoning Boards to review specific proposals. However, it won't be a stand-alone tool, as it is unable to generate a Town-wide overlay map identifying best siting locations. No site will meet all criteria; the tool's results need to make this clear. Kevin - are there points we can get for the Solar Mapping Tool project? Tara - NYSERDA's talking about it, but at present, no (we are a beta tester community). NY is creating an Office of Solar Siting, so that may result in NYSERDA stepping back from involvement in these types of solar incentives. We will all have to wait and see.

Kevin/Vance- Chris Carmody repaired the EV charging unit, and saved the Town \$375.

Angus- Community Solar presentation to the Town Board resulted in adoption of the Solarize Chatham program proposal. We'll be required to keep the Town Board updated on our plans, and requests for any sort of budget for promotional aids. Next step is to reach out to area solar providers, and to area municipalities farther along in their Solarize programs for advice. Deborah wants information from the providers on billing options, as digital-only may not work for those in town with no reliable internet. Also want to find out if there is a commercial or municipal program available that the group should also be promoting. Tara noted that unified billing is mandatory, but not required until January.

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Kevin - EVC report is in. We completed the free charging 2 year period required by the grant. Kevin will forward the full figures in a separate email attachment. In summary, had we been charging during those 2 years, we'd have added \$1500 in net profit to the town's income. We now charge a market rate of 28cents per KW hour, roughly equal to \$2.20 per gallon. John - the rate doesn't provide incentive for use, can it be adjusted? Kevin- yes, but we'd need to ensure we cover costs, and we'd need to confer with Ghent, as we've agreed that the proximity of both Ev stations necessitates they charge the same rates.

Deborah - Any way to increase the load so it charges cars faster? Tara - no, that's a different type of equipment (level 3) that is much more expensive, and was not covered by the grant.

Donal - has there been a drop in users, now that there's a fee to charge? Kevin - the fee kicked in during the height of NY pandemic lockdown, so it's hard to tell.

Abi - a local landscaper is eager to see the town start a community composting project. Tara - talk to Bill Mancini and Warren Applegate of Kinderhook to see what advice they have. John - keep in mind that such a project would take a lot of education and sorting, because a lot of material can be toxic and therefore useless for compost distribution. Donal - a digester at the Town transfer station was considered and dropped due to cost and potential negative odor impact on neighbors. Karla is still interested in looking into it.

Karla & Angus - Can we set up a Swap Shop at the Transfer station, to keep useful items out of the waste stream? Should we add a question about support for this to the Comp Plan survey?

Vance- everyone please fill out the Town's Broadband Survey.

Next meeting July 28 6pm.