

**MEETING MINUTES FOR:
Town of Aurora Climate Smart Community Task Force**

MEETING DETAILS

Project Manager: Luke Wochensky, Town of Aurora Councilman

Date: 12/18/2024

Time: 6:02 pm

Location: Town of Aurora Municipal Building, 575 Oakwood Ave. East Aurora, NY

ATTENDANCE

Present: **Luke Wochensky**- Town of Aurora Council member; **Ray Wrazen** - Town of Aurora Council member; **Claudia Newton**- ACES Representative; **Susan Russell**- ACES Representative & Village of East Aurora Zoning Board; **Sharon Bachman**- in advisory role from Cornell Cooperative Extension; **Steve Bjella**- Village resident, member of ACES, **Lori Borowiak**, Village resident, **Annika Safford** - Village resident & Student at University of VT, Sustainability & Marketing Program.

Present via Zoom: *N/A*

Absent:

Visitors: *Michele/ Bjella*- Village Resident & member of Citizens Climate Lobby & ACES; **Jeffrey Shelley**- Environmental Science Instructor, East Aurora High School, in advisory role as Faculty Student Liaison for EAHS Sustainability Club; **John Hughes**, Town Open Space Committee, **Guest Speaker: Jim Bodecker**, Director Business Development, National Solar Technologies (166 Taylor Dr, Depew, NY 14042. 716-228-2294 www.nstsolar.com)

Agenda

- I. **Call to Order 6:00pm**
- II. **Issues for Discussion**

- 1. **Senior Center**- Luke reports that the Senior Center has now replaced plastic plates and utensils with reusable plates, drinking glasses, & flatware. This was arranged through Erie County following a request from Luke.
- 2. **Committee Composition in 2025: Nicole has to resign due to conflict of interest with employer (NYSERDA).** Luke Wochensky, Sharon Bachman, Sue Russell, Claudia Newton, Steve Bjella, Jeanne Beiter, Lori Borowiak, (Michelle Bjella or John Hughes to replace Nicole). Maya Reynolds, Junior

Member from EA High School: **Hanna Michalek**, Senior member from EA High School

3. **Group Picture with new Town Highway Dept's. electric pickup and mower:** To be scheduled with the EA Advertiser the first week of January, late afternoon. Please attend if you can.
4. **Climate Smart Warrior of the Year:** Award to be given in conjunction with Scoot Around June. Committee agrees it's a good concept.
5. **Aurora Solar Savings:** No reply from Senior Center or ROC regarding hosting an information table. Letter to residents approved. Will be sent shortly. 43 full sign ups as reported by Brad seems low- request to be made to Brad for a full spreadsheet with breakdown of completed applications, incomplete applications, and applications pending to be moved to new farm.
6. **Comp Plan Update:** Sue/Ray - Steering Committee met with LaBella Associates on 12/10/24. Agenda included: **Vision Exercise Review assessment of Core Values.** (Top 5 values: Environmental Stewardship, Family, Cultural Heritage, Education , Accessibility, Work-life balance. Most frequently Cited Values- Environmental Stewardship, Family, Cultural Heritage, Education , Respect for Nature); **First draft of Vision Statement;** Existing Conditions Update that included Demographics, Assessment of Parks & Recreation Resources, Historical & Cultural Assets, & Land Use; and a **Community Engagement Update** on Public Survey (Approaching 400 responses so far) and Stakeholder Interviews completed at 62% response rate. Survey deadline extended to end of February. Public Outreach strategies discussed. **First Public Workshop** planned for 2/26 or 2/27 possibly at the EA Middle School or the EA High School. **Community Profile Categories** to be evaluated: Land Use & Zoning, Agriculture & Natural Resources, Housing & Neighborhoods, Transportation Systems, and Public Utilities & Infrastructure. **SWOT Exercise was also conducted and the results are attached to minutes. All CSC Task Members- please fill out the survey!**
<https://www.townofauroracomplan.com/> or use the QR code attached to minutes.
7. **Guest Speaker: Jim Bodecker**, Director Business Development, National Solar Technologies (166 Taylor Dr, Depew, NY 14042. 716-228-2294 **www.nstsolar.com**) Jim is a Town of Aurora resident. National Solar Technologies has a state contract, which makes it easier to work with municipalities (no RfP is necessary). Discussion of potential projects for the town. He will work up some possible proposals for the Municipal Center Bldg.

7. **Silver Status path:** Luke- brief discussion of possible actions and some actions completed but not represented on chart. Town specific GHG data should be available from Jason by year's end. Agreement to postpone deeper discussion to Jan meeting.
8. **Social media:** Postponed to Jan meeting.
9. **Review priority and goals:** Postponed to Jan meeting.

III. Open Discussion: Not discussed due to time limitations, but the following updates are provided:

Scout Around June - Postponed to Jan Meeting.

Envirofest 2025 - Interested leads for this autumn 2025 project are Anika Safford, Sharon Bachman, Michele Bjella (maybe). Interested committee members are: Michele Bjella, Claudia Newton, Jeannet DeJong, Jessica Dudley, Zoe Sharp, Ellen Neumaier.

Dare to Repair Cafe - Darren Cotton from Buffalo Tool Library's Dare to Repair Cafe is interested in collaborating with the CSC Task Force and ACES to bring their mobile Repair Cafe to Aurora. They bring tools and volunteers and do publicity. Sends report at the end with # of people, items fixed, success rate, pounds diverted and Carbon offset calculator. Local repair volunteers can also participate. The ideal goal is to launch the concept locally under the tutelage of Darren Cotton for the first repair cafe and then run them independently in the future. 15-20 six ft tables would be required, 30-40 chairs, on-site parking, 5-10 electrical outlets, accessible entrance, restrooms, waiting/overflow area, registration area, refreshment area. Suggested donation to Dare to Repair is \$500-\$1000. ACES can donate \$100. Suggested location: Senior Center.

Available dates are: Saturdays 10-1 or 11-2; Mon, Tues, Weds, Thurs, 5-7pm.
Interested committee members are: Charlotte Von Adler, Jessica Dudley, Jeannet DeJong, Carol Piech, Ray, Wrazen, Michelle Bjella, Steve Oubre, Susan Russell, Russ Miner.

IV. Closing Remarks

V. Adjournment- Meeting adjourned at 7:15pm

Minutes submitted by: Susan Russell

Town of Aurora Comprehensive Plan Public Survey

The Town of Aurora is creating a Comprehensive Plan to guide future policies on land use, housing, infrastructure, and more, and they need your input! Share your feedback about the Town's challenges, strengths, and opportunities. Your responses to this survey are confidential and will help shape Aurora's future — thank you for participating!

Survey Details

How to Take the Survey:
The survey can be accessed online using the following link or scanning the adjacent QR code:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AuroraCompPlanSurvey>

*Paper copies of the survey are also available at the Town Municipal Building.

Deadline:
Please submit your responses by **January 31st, 2025**

More Information:
For more information, about the plan, visit the project website:
<https://www.townofauroracomplan.com/>

Share Your Thoughts About Your Community Today!



Town of Aurora | 575 Oakwood Ave, East Aurora, NY, 14052 |
<https://www.townofaurora.com/>

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- School system
- Recreational opportunities & parks of all sizes
- History and community recognition
- Economic opportunities
- Arts & crafts scene
- Family oriented
- Population that is engaged in the community/active volunteer base
- No traffic congestion
- Arts culture – Aurora players
- Low crime and active emergency services
- Healthy natural ecosystem – air, water & abundant forests
- Plethora of open space
- Recent investments – West Falls NYF
- Lack of sprawling sewer system

Weaknesses

- Cost of housing
- Aging population
- Lack of senior housing
- Lack of diverse housing
- Aging infrastructure – stormwater runoff on Mill Rd and in West Falls
- Lack of sewer utilization
- Multi-modal accessibility
- Connections between parks
- Internet connectivity
- Lack of public water on Knox Rd
- Lack of a regional draw – reliant on the popularity of the village
- Missing businesses that provide everyday goods and services that can only be found in the village.

Threats

- Cost of housing

o **Climate change & infrastructure resiliency**

- o Pressure from big box store development
- o Declining school enrollment
- o Loss of economic character – local and family-owned stores
- o Lossing jobs centers – Fisher Price

o **Pedestrian and bicyclist safety**

Opportunities

- o Extension of the rail trail
- o Village & town collaboration
- o **Vacant parcel development**
- o Existing housing stock
- o Zoning changes – permit more ADUs
- o Attract commuters and those who work from home
- o Hamlet center development
- o Utilizing the Town's compete street policy to redesign roads aligning with road maintenance schedules.
- o **Leverage state and federal grants**
- **Tree management**