

MEETING MINUTES FOR: 03/20/2024
Town of Aurora Climate Smart Community Task Force

MEETING DETAILS

Project Manager: Luke Wochensky, Town of Aurora Councilman

Date: 03/20/2024

Time: 6:00pm

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

ATTENDANCE

Present: **Luke Wochensky**- Town of Aurora Councilman; **Nicole Morris-McLaughlin**- Village resident; member of ACES; **Jeanne Beiter**- Senior Program Manager for Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper & Village of East Aurora Planning Board; **Claudia Newton**- ACES Representative; **Susan Russell**- ACES Representative & Village of East Aurora Zoning Board; **Sharon Bachman**- in advisory role from Cornell Cooperative Extension; **Michele Bjella**- Village Resident & member of Citizens Climate Lobby;

Present via Zoom: **Steve Bjella**- Village resident; **Lori Borowiak**- Village resident;

Absent: **Annika Safford** - Village resident & Student at University of VT, Sustainability & Marketing Program- submitted report via email prior to meeting. **Pat Lally**- East Aurora HS Sustainability Club; **Hanna Michalek** - East Aurora HS Sustainability Club, Junior member;

Visitors: **Lorenz Schnitzer**

I. CALL TO ORDER - 6:00PM

Minutes from February approved.

II. ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

- **Solar Campaign Scoping Document-Luke:** Goes to NYS and NYSERDA: Luke- Nicole cautions that it can take 6 months to one year for program to turn on. We can sign people up right away however. She recommends Town negotiate for 15% and donations to local NFP's. First goal is 10 people, ultimate goal is 160. Businesses and municipalities can also partake. Not sure about schools. Vote to accept the scoping document. Claudia moves to approve. Steve seconds. Passes unanimously.

- **Press Release re: website- Michelle:** Motion to approve by Sue, Second by Claudia to send to Bee and EA Advertiser, & Buffalo News. Approved with addition of contact info.
- **Clean Fleets Inventory-Claudia:** Working on gathering data and also comparing with other communities approach to this task. Some difficulty regarding MPG vs GPH. Some vehicles are County owned which complicates the report. They are kept in the West Falls Barn even though they only plow 1 mile in the Town. Application for electric charger at Highway Barn; hope is to purchase EV pick up truck. Other possibilities for improvement could be lawnmowers, dog catcher van, pick up trucks, week whackers as other heavier vehicle technology is developed.
- **CSC Task Force Logo:** Sue- presented ideas to committee for logo, event tablecloth, and t-shirts as designed by Joel Brandon. Feedback focusing on 3rd design. Colors approved.
- **Social Media- Annika & Hannah:** Annika reports that she and Hannah have a document going with ideas for introductory posts. Please let us know about any timeline we should adhere to. Also please inform if a decision is made on the logo so that we can include it on the social media sites.
- **Silver Status Certification- Luke:**
 - **Comprehensive plan RFP update and review of PE6 and PE7 (attached)**
- **Clean Energy Community Goals: Luke**
- **Community Campaign – timing and planning**
 - **Energy Audit -** Laurie has reached out to 2 flex tech contractors for energy audit on Library and Municipal Bldg. Nicole recommends and Energy Savings Performance contract be done as well. Offer financing plans that capitalize energy savings. Laurie thinks that could work well for the library as an older inefficient bldg, vs. the newer, efficient Municipal Bldg. Recommends the ESP Contract for library and free NYSERDA audit for Municipal Bldg. Question is whether or not the Town or County pays for the energy at the library. Waiting for 2023 data to move forward.
- **Scout Around June- Luke:** Does the group want to take this on again this year? Annika might be interested. Consensus is that the group would like to move forward again. Lorenz and Michelle will help.
- **Review priority and goals**

III. OPEN DISCUSSION

IV. CLOSING REMARKS

V. ADJOURNMENT - Meeting adjourned at 7:03pm

Minutes submitted by: Susan Russell

For Immediate Release
1:54 pm, March 19, 2024

Aurora, New York
CLEAN GREEN AURORA website announced
Climate Smart Community Task Force: a new important information resource

Are you on a quest to plant additional trees or wondered how the new CodeRED Alert system can help warn your family of severe weather events here in the town of Aurora? The new website (<https://cleangreenaurora.com>) was unveiled in late February serving as a resource for all community members. View environmentally beneficial as well as safety-related town projects, challenges and opportunities on the local level by visiting this beautifully designed website.

Under "Projects", you'll see specific actions the Town of Aurora is taking to reduce its carbon footprint, including the new Comprehensive Plan, "Scoot around June", water management and food scrap composting. If you have questions regarding climate change you will find information here, including the impacts of severe weather and storms. Register for the helpful CodeRED alerts and become aware of town road plowing info and energy use.

Dip into the website or do a deep dive to learn more about Aurora, engage with your issue of interest or take action in daily life. Designed by task force member, Susan Russell, this is a treasure trove as we face the challenges and opportunities to improve our quality of life and preserve it for our children and grandchildren.

LUKE WOCHENSKY
Councilmember / Deputy Supervisor
Town of Aurora
575 Oakwood Ave.
East Aurora, NY 14052
LWochensky@TownofAurora.com



PE7 Action: Climate Vulnerability Assessment

4 Points

8 Points

16 Points



BRONZE PRIORITY



SILVER PRIORITY

A. Why is this action important?

Climate resilience begins with understanding hazards posed by a changing climate and identifying community vulnerabilities. Climate change does not affect all assets, systems, operations, or community members equally, so performing a comprehensive assessment of local vulnerabilities and risks helps identify and prioritize actions to reduce risks to the community. In conducting a vulnerability assessment, the local government must consider current and future conditions. For example, in assessing the risk of flooding along tidal coastlines, a community should include conditions associated with projected sea level rise in 2050 and 2100. The Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program recommends that local governments complete a vulnerability assessment as one of the first and most foundational steps in developing an effective strategy for adapting to climate change at the local level.

Developing a vulnerability assessment involves identifying, analyzing and prioritizing the effects of climate hazards and risks, like flooding, heat stress or short-term drought. A climate hazard is a physical event or trend that could affect a population segment or the entire community, specific areas, assets, or entire systems (for example, transportation or energy infrastructure) including the local economy and industries. A vulnerability assessment process should consider diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ) from start to finish since vulnerabilities will likely lead to varying risks across the diverse populations in your community.

Local governments may elect to undertake this action as a standalone project, or as part of a larger effort, such as a PE7 Action: Climate Adaptation Plan, PE6 Action: Comprehensive Plan with Sustainability Elements, PE7 Action: Hazard Mitigation Plan, PE7 Action: Watershed Assessment, local waterfront revitalization plan, or others. Hazard Mitigation Plans should help identify relevant community climate hazards.

For communities to thoroughly plan for climate adaptation and resiliency, our program recommends completing PE7 Action: Evaluate Policies for Climate Resilience, PE7 Action: Climate Vulnerability Assessment, and PE7 Action: Climate Adaptation Plan. These three actions combined will empower a community to understand its risks, identify strengths and gaps in its existing planning, and create a plan to guide future actions and projects.

B. How to implement this action

Conduct a vulnerability assessment, using the steps outlined below (see additional resources and examples in Section G).

1. Research relevant studies of climate change projections to identify hazards that apply to your community. Review and summarize state and regional studies, including ClimAID (2011 and 2014) and the NYS 2100 Commission Report (2012), local studies (if available), and relevant national studies, as needed. Seek local knowledge on climate hazards via public meetings, surveys and other means (for example, a workshop where residents draw on a map where they have experienced flooding).

Some climate hazards for consideration include the following:

- o Increasing temperatures, especially in winter
- o Increasing frequency and durations of heat waves
- o Increasing intensity of precipitation (rain/snow/ice/hail)
- o Rising sea levels
- o Increasing frequency and severity of coastal flooding, storm surge, wave force and erosion
- o Increasing frequency and severity of riverine flooding

PE6 Action: Comprehensive Plan with Sustainability Elements

3 — 21 Points



BRONZE PRIORITY



SILVER PRIORITY

A. Why is this action important?

Local governments are responsible for planning in a number of areas, including housing, transportation, water, open space, waste management, energy, and disaster preparedness. In New York State, these planning efforts can be combined into a comprehensive plan that steers investments by local governments and guides future development through zoning regulations. A comprehensive plan provides communities with a strong defense for regulations adopted in conformance with the plan. Almost 70% of the cities, towns, and villages in New York State have a comprehensive plan, according to a [survey](#).

A comprehensive plan also provides a vision for how a community wants to grow over a 10- to 20-year period and recommends steps for how to achieve that vision. As part of that vision, the comprehensive planning process offers an opportunity for communities to consider how to balance the three "Es" of sustainability: environment, economy, and equity. Because moving toward greater sustainability is often in alignment with mitigating and adapting to climate change, the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program encourages local governments to integrate sustainability into their comprehensive plans.

B. How to implement this action

Local governments should incorporate sustainability elements throughout the comprehensive plan. Alternatively, they may add sustainability as a standalone chapter to the plan or as a separate plan incorporated by reference, though integration is preferable. These approaches may be taken for a new plan or adopted as an amendment to the existing comprehensive plan.

The steps listed below can be followed to incorporate sustainability into the comprehensive plan, whether as a new plan or as a plan amendment (though the scope of an amendment might be focused on a particular topic, such as a bike and pedestrian plan). As with all planning processes, public outreach and engagement are essential throughout the creation of the plan. The local government should seek diverse participation, ensuring that the process actively involves all segments of the community, and should use a variety of communication channels to inform and engage the public.

1. **Public Outreach and Engagement:** Develop communications strategy. Identify stakeholders from all segments of the community. Launch outreach (i.e., social media, public meetings). Define what sustainability means to the community.
2. **Baseline Assessment:** Analyze existing conditions for land use, economic development, housing, energy, transportation, and natural, cultural, and historic resources.
3. **Develop Goals:** Use media and survey tools to capture the community's vision. Set goals with stakeholders and subcommittees. Ensure goals address the three "Es" of sustainability: environment, economy, and equity. Determine goals to address the community's sustainability definition.
4. **Identify and Evaluate Strategies and Actions:** Conduct research on national best practices. Facilitate strategy and action identification process. Develop evaluation criteria and evaluate strategies. Prioritize strategies and actions. Determine strategies to achieve sustainability goals and detail implementation actions.
5. **Integration:** Develop draft plan for review by the community. Integrate comments from community. Assign implementation responsibilities. Finalize the plan.

Local governments should ensure that responsibilities for carrying out the plan are clearly assigned. This will be key to the successful implementation of the newly incorporated sustainability elements. Wherever possible, strategies should also