

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Aurora Climate Smart Community Task Force

MEETING DETAILS

Project Manager: Luke Wochensky, Town of Aurora Councilman

Date: 11/19/2025

Time: 6:00pm

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

ATTENDANCE

Present: **Susan Russell**- ACES Representative & Village of East Aurora Zoning Board; **Steve Bjella**- Village resident

Visitors: **Michele/ Bjella**- Village Resident & member of Citizens Climate Lobby;

Absent: **Luke Wochensky**- Town of Aurora Council member; **Lori Borowiak**- Village resident; **Annika Safford** - Village resident & graduate of University of VT, Sustainability & Marketing Program; **Sharon Bachman**- in advisory role from Cornell Cooperative Extension; **Jeanne Beiter**- Senior Program Manager for Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper & Village of East Aurora Planning Board; **Claudia Newton**- ACES Representative & Town of Aurora resident

I. CALL TO ORDER - 6:15PM

II. ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

1) Dare To Repair Cafe: Sue Russell - Buffalo Tool Library's 2026 schedule is out and spots are filling. Does the committee want to do it again? Who will lead? Sue has extensive notes on how to organize this event with the Buffalo Tool Library and is willing to train/co-chair. What is the town willing to fund?

2) GCP Climate Vulnerability Assessment: Sue Russell - Consultant Josh McClain from La Bella reports the document is still undergoing revisions. From there, it will be sent along with the rest of the rest of the General Comp Plan, to Erie County for review. A final copy of the assessment will be shared once it passes Erie County review.

3) CSC Website: Sue Russell: Sue has changed to a different WIX plan to lessen the cost. It was previously over \$400. New cost: \$56.50 2 yr domain (12/25-12/27) Annual Lite Plan of \$221.85 Due on March 16th 2026) Total: **\$278.35**. Sue also reports that this year, once the GCP is finalized she will be working on overhauling the site to make it more user friendly for tablet and cell phones.

4) Aurora Solar Savings: Sue Russell- Sue submitted the following LTE to the EA Advertiser: "As reported by the Advertiser, door-to-door sales people have been knocking on doors offering residents discounts on their NYSEG bills if they register with a the Solcius Community Solar program. These salespeople do NOT represent the *Town of Aurora's "Aurora Solar Savings"* program. **The Aurora Solar Savings program is absolutely legitimate, town-supported, and state-regulated.** There is no door-to-door component. Misrepresenting oneself as NYSEG is deceptive and not a practice our program uses or supports.

As a result of the Aurora Solar Savings campaign, 63 Aurora households and small businesses are enrolled across three NYSEG community solar projects, all offering a 10% discount. A total of 22 residents are already receiving monthly savings on their NYSEG bills. The remainder, who are on the Dickinson project, will begin seeing savings very soon. The ribbon cutting for Dickinson was held in September, and the project is now online. It usually takes two or three billing cycles for NYSEG to allocate the credits so they begin appearing on people's bills. Therefore, residents should begin receiving credits either on their November or December bills.

Our Aurora Solar Savings remains active, and new enrollments can be routed to additional projects within the NYSEG portfolio. There are still limited spaces available on a first-come first served basis. You can access the sign-up link at CleanGreenAurora.com"

Brad Tito from Power Market is offering to write a letter to the same for the Town to send to residents.

Discussion about reigniting the Solar campaign - the project has stalled. Ideas: New letter that Brad writes for town to send, Welcome Wagon style letter for new home owners from town or realtors; new letter from Chamber of Commerce directed to business sign-ups; pop up display/sign up table at popular places ie., 42 North, Elm St. Bakery- especially ones who have signed up already as they would be supportive. Can we get a list of businesses from Brad Tito?

5) Silver Status Update: Sue Russell - Sue shared the following information from Josh McClain (UB): "Please let me know if it would be helpful for me and/or my colleague Erin Hanaburgh, who recently joined our team, to attend tomorrow's CSC meeting or a subsequent one.

As a reminder for the meeting, earlier this year the Town purchased an electric Ford F150 Lightning. This will also qualify for 3 CSC points for the Advanced Vehicles (PE7) action.

One CSC program update, beginning in 2026 there will be two submission dates instead of three (Jan 9 & May 22), but as part of the State's review process there will now be a two-week window where applicants will have the opportunity to make minor corrections to their applications. <https://climatesmart.ny.gov/actions-certification/certification-overview/application-cycle/>

III. OPEN DISCUSSION - Discussion about when new member appointments to the task force take place. Will John Hughes and Michell Bjella be candidates?

IV. CLOSING REMARKS - N/A

V. ADJOURNMENT - Meeting adjourned at 7:07pm
Next Meeting: 12/17/25 6pm

Minutes submitted by: Susan Russell