

## MEETING MINUTES

### Town of Aurora Climate Smart Community Task Force

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## MEETING DETAILS

**Project Manager:** Ben Garvey

**Date:** 06/17/1026

**Time:** 6:00pm

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

## ATTENDANCE

**Present:** Sharon Bachman-Erie County Cornell Cooperative Extension, Steve Bjella-Village resident; Claudia Newton- ACES Representative & Town of Aurora resident; Annika Safford-Village resident and graduate of University of VT, Sustainability & Marketing Program

**Absent:** Lori Borowiak-Village resident; Susan Russell- ACES Representative and Village of East Aurora Zoning Board of Appeals

**Visitors:** Michele Bjella-Village Resident and member of Citizens Climate Lobby;  
Erin Hanaburgh-UBRI (University of Buffalo Regional Institute),  
Luke Wochensky - mayor of East Aurora

## OLD BUSINESS

**Dare to Repair Cafe** - Ben proposed reaching out to local businesses for donations in exchange for being mentioned as sponsors; would they want to send a representative to the event (e.g. Ace Hardware, VALU, sewing center). Discussed possibility of expanding the event to a reuse/repair/environmental fair. Is there space? Perhaps an alternative venue for future years? Would there be enough attendee interest to justify participation by multiple groups? (e.g. library, Erie County soil stewards, Southtown Kids, Bookworm, local businesses...)

**Comprehensive Plan Memorandum update** - A committee has divided responsibilities for different sections. This does not need to be an extensive document; it only needs to include page numbers for the goals, strategies to achieve the goals, and implementation details.

**Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) update** - a grant opportunity is being considered, and a meeting will be held later this week to evaluate current progress on NRI work, and decide on pursuing a grant to help with inventory creation. Erin says their intern at UBRI may be able to help with maps for the inventory.

**Circle at the south end of the 400** - The Town board members approved a pollinator garden for this circle. Ben has spoken with Masterson's who agreed to provide a free garden plan. Sharon will work with the 4-H on this project; the Gow School, the Master Gardeners and others will be contacted about involvement. The project will be eligible for CSC points under "Traffic Calming

Measures” and will include education elements, and it also aligns with the Comprehensive Plan. Funding will be sought from the budget and possible donations of plants.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Carpooling** - Ben is investigating the possibility of a carpool incentive program that could include dedicated parking spaces. This would also help on the path to CSC Silver status.

**July 3 Parade** - Perhaps the committee could participate using an electric vehicle from the Town, and promote the Date to Repair Cafe. Ben will discuss with Sue Russell.

**Refrigerant Management** - Ben is working with Joe McCann to explore environmentally friendly ways to deal with refrigerant waste.

**Climate Initiatives Progress in the Village** - The Community Solar project achieved a 7% participation rate, well above our goal of 3%. Now we need to work on other CSC actions. **Luke Wochensky** reported on initiatives by the Village. These include special bins on Main Street that include recycling options; possible special collection of corrugated cardboard; composting at Fireman’s field, and open space acquisition for the Village. They have plans to pilot an electric vehicle in the police fleet, and are exploring funding opportunities through NYSERDA for a net-zero building study including battery storage grants. Dan Burton of Blue Zones will be coming to East Aurora for a two-day walking tour to study vulnerability and potential one-way street implementation on Pine, Payne and Elm. (July 7-9)

### **Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Certification:**

Aurora has Bronze certification and will need to earn approximately 75 points (through new actions and recertifying expired actions) to reach 300 points for Silver certification. Erin of UBRI reported that the Town is in a good position to earn those points by May of next year (submission deadlines in 2027 are in January and May), especially because the Town has already worked on elements from the required Priority Action areas. UBRI is ready to assist us!

New actions can include the Natural Resource Inventory (a committee is currently working on this), an organics management plan, a climate adaptation plan and a community GHG inventory (16 points). The team agreed to review specific CSC actions over the next month and will narrow down priority projects at our next meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT** - Meeting adjourned at 7:38 pm

**Next Meeting: 07/15/26**

Minutes submitted by: Claudia Newton