

Minutes

Kirkland/Clinton Climate Smart Community Task Force

November 18, 2021 - 6:30 pm

Present: Carol Gable, coordinator; Sally Carman, secretary; Alan Cole, webmaster; Steve Orvis; Mona Perrotti; Shirley Knop; Kathy Collett; Garry Colarusso; Liseli Haines; Alma Lowery; Alicia Luhrssen-Zombek; and Steve Bellona, and guests: Sandy Scofield; Doug Soika; and Brian Roy.

Planned solar field

Doug Soika owns property adjacent to the fields where the planned solar farm will be built. One of his neighbors has been removing invasive species along the Oriskany Creek. This area is often flooded and he considers it a wetland. The Kirkland Planning Board approved the farm after 30 conditions were met. Doug would like to see native pollinators planted below the solar panels. These would require no on-going maintenance. The proposed rye and bluegrass are not the best for dealing with the soggy ground, and would require regular cutting. He wonders if it is too late to propose a different planting plan, which he would like our committee to support.

Planting the proper trees surrounding the farm can also help with absorbing water and preventing erosion. Also, there should be no pesticides used.

Alma noted that the official definition of a wetland is very specific. A land that floods may not be considered a wetland.

Action item: Kathy and Doug will draft a letter to the company building the solar farm requesting them to plant native species. They will note that this would provide positive publicity for the company and save money on mowing.

Action item: Alicia will talk to Holly who coordinates the Master Gardeners at Cornell Cooperative Extension, for ideas.

Action item: Carol will combine this information and send it to the solar company on behalf of our task force.

Electric vehicles -

Brian Roy represents Energetics, with an office in Clinton on Kirkland Ave. He would like to recruit owners of all-electric and hybrid electric cars to take part in a study of the ways in which the vehicles are used - where they are charged, how often they are charged, what range they have, etc. The data collected will help determine where charging stations are needed and what other infrastructure is required such as energy grid requirements, and times of day of increased demand.

Garry reported on the new Kirkland charging station to be installed at the Clinton Arena. The unit is being supplied by Potentia, based in New Hartford. The necessary wiring has been completed. However, the funding promised from NYSERDA has not arrived, and thus the

project is stalled. There are 30 other locations waiting for funding in order to proceed. Hopefully, a new budget year beginning in January will free up these funds. Attaching the station to the Internet for monitoring purposes requires additional funding, and the Town is not currently willing to assume that debt.

Mona noted that the Kirkland Town Library is also working on an electric vehicle charging station to be installed in their parking lot.

Sherrill Brook Forest Project

Alan Cole is the liaison to that group and will keep us informed.

Food Waste Pilot Project

Sally reported that there are 49 families in the Village of Clinton taking part in the Green Bucket Project which began collection in October. Data is being collected for the next six months to determine the amount of waste diverted from the Ava landfill. A large number of yard signs have been distributed throughout the Village to increase awareness of the project and help promote it.

Since this was supported by the Village, it can be updated on the NYSERDA site.

Community meeting on flooding

This will be held some time in January. It will be discussed at the December meeting. Aaron Strong and Jon Scott are coordinating the meeting.

Solar meeting

A meeting was held on November 17 at the Kirkland Town Library as well as on Zoom to discuss solar electricity. There were questions about the local impact of the planned solar farm, and who will benefit from it? Also, why are there not more solar units on roofs and on farms? What is the life cycle of these units? More transparency is needed with more information about projects presented earlier. More education about the project would be helpful.

Carol attended a Carson University event addressing solar power in New York State. There are not enough roofs to provide all the power that is needed in the state.

Climate Smart Institute

Carol and Alan will attend with Amy Wyatt representing NYSERDA

Heat Smart meeting

Kathy talked to representatives from Heat Smart. She is getting a heat pump installed in her own home. She is willing to do a virtual tour of the installation. Installing a heat pump has a tax advantage. We need to determine a time and place for a community meeting about this.

Action item: Carol will set up a time in late February or early March for a community meeting. This will need to be after the community meeting on flooding.

Community education plan

Alma is working on an education plan to be approved by the Town and the Village. She distributed a draft proposal via email for comment by our group..

Green space

Sandy Scofield proposed that the Village (and perhaps Town) consider buying property formerly owned by Bittiker oil, which is next to Brownie Rug/tent company on McBride Ave. This could be a trail head for a proposed northern section of the Kirkland Trail. This would add to the small footprint of green areas in the Village. It could host community gardens, native pollinating species of plants could be grown, it might have picnic tables, or a place for science classes to learn about nature. The Kirkland Trails group is looking for a trail head.

Steve Bellona will be meeting with the Kirkland Clinton Improvement Committee on November 19. About \$150,000 is needed to purchase and improve this property.

A new coordinator for the Task Force is needed. [Subsequently, Steve Orvis has volunteered.]

The next meeting will be via Zoom on Thursday, December 16 at 6:30 pm.

Sally Carman
Secretary