

## **Minutes of the Putnam County Climate Smart Task Force Meeting February 2, 2024**

The Feb. 2024 meeting of the Putnam County Climate Smart task force was called to order at 10:04 a.m.

### Members Present

**In Person:** Ilona Campo, Barbara Barosa, Neal Tomann, Jennifer Caruso, Joe Bellucci, Joe Montuori, Michael O'Brian

**Microsoft Teams:** Shawn Rogan, Amy Sayegh, Anne Campbell

### 1. **Review of December Meeting Minutes**

Minutes will be amended to include Joe Montuori's comment about collecting the Town's NRIs as well as Eleanor Peck's comment to correct the re-certification time period from three years to *five years*.

### 2. **Climate Smart Portal Uploads / Points Thus Far**

Climate Smart Action Chart spreadsheet was amended to include two additional actions (PE1) Partnerships with Other Entities and (PE2) Community Greenhouse Gas Inventory. A review of the actions and updates include:

- Action: **CSC Task Force** – On track for points, need to upload agendas, minutes, attendance sheets, etc. into portal.
- Action: **CSC Coordinator** – Completed, everyone was appointed via Executive Memo. on 12/7/23.
- Action: **Partnerships with Other Entities** – Ilona will draft an MOU for partnership going forward with Sustainable Putnam. Previous CCE MOUs have been uploaded to portal. Barbara questioned if we had other partnerships with documentation such as town Climate Smart boards, Scenic Hudson, land trusts (Putnam County Land Trust, Hudson Highlands, Hudson Valley Land Trust) the Law Dept. might have more documentation on this.
- Action: **Community GHG Inventory** – J. Montuori and Ilona attended the Creating a Community GHG Inventory: 2021 Mid-Hudson Regional Inventory Update webinar on 1/25/24 hosted by Melanie Patapis of HVRC. Melanie drafted a great template for Community GHG Inventories. Ilona presented the draft inventory, which has already been updated with the necessary sections of Putnam's data (community profile, wastewater numbers provided by Shawn, etc.) Largest sector of GHG emissions was Transportation followed by Residential. 16 points toward this priority action. Once finalized, it will be posted to the County's Climate Smart website.
- Action: **Govt. Building Energy Audits** – Completed with Ameresco's 2019 report.
- Action: **Interior Lighting / HVAC Upgrades** – Excel sheet detailing Lighting and HVAC upgrades to be completed soon.
- Action: **BEMS** – Ameresco looking into how to get access to the data dashboard. J. Bellucci mentioned that the integration process is slow but still in progress, maybe no tangible data yet. Might have to remove this action.
- Action: **Fleet Inventory** – Michael mentioned that the inventory contains all the necessary columns and that the sheet is roughly 80% completed. Neal mentioned that one department in particular was difficult to get data from and that the process is still semi-automated meaning there's still room for human error. The spreadsheet will be reviewed again in six months then updated annually. Michael will send the completed spreadsheet to Ilona asap.
- Action: **Outdoor Lighting Upgrades** – Ilona received the product cut sheets and aerial photographs from Ameresco.

- Action: **Solar Energy Instillation** – Ilona received access to the SolarEdge monitoring dashboard in Dec. 2023 and presented the dashboard during the meeting. Ameresco is pressing SolarEdge to get the COB onto the dashboard, regardless, the system is still up and running. Hard to determine the financial savings at this point because there is an outstanding contract that doesn't expire until Oct. 2024. Environmental Benefits (CO2 emissions saved and equivalent trees planted) is a nice bonus. J. Montuori mentioned he has access to the same software from his home solar system. Est. 20 points for 331 peak hours of kW production.
- Action: **Recycling Bins in Govt. Buildings** – Ilona noted that this action shouldn't take too long as it only requires some pictures and written documentation. Shawn mentioned that the bins were distributed 10+ years ago and will be difficult to track down from the Solid Waste Dept. Shawn will follow up with fiscal. Barbara will also look through her emails to find anything. Vicky DiLonardo might know more.
- Action: **Construction and Demo. Waste Policy** – Neal thinks this should be easily feasible as we're following Broome County's template. Does this policy need to be adopted by the Leg.? Ilona will look more into this. If it's not feasible this round, we can try and submit for it later. Amy questioned when the deadline for this was, Ilona mentioned that the goal is to submit by the State of the County address in early March (official deadline is April 5<sup>th</sup>).
- Action: **Complete Streets Policy** – Priority action was completed with Leg. Adoption in Dec. 2023.
- Action: **Planning for Biking and Walking** – Barbara will look for old master plans that satisfy the requirements.
- Action: **Infrastructure for Biking and Walking** – Ilona needs additional materials on the bikeways. Barbara mentioned the Access to the Empire State Trail project and two other bikeway bridge projects. Est. 3 points for this variable action. Amy mentioned that constituents have contacted her about the need to ride their bikes in the wintertime, is there enough equipment to maintain the bike paths in the winter? Neal mentioned that a lot of cities run into problems with liability, once plowed then the implication is that they're safe. Barbara said plowing degrades the surface too. Anne mentioned a bike path segment near Poughkeepsie that is regularly plowed and maintained, but then users lose the ability to cross country ski on the trails and there is an environmental hazard of salt entering sensitive areas too. Amy told the constituent that the bikeways are considered "winter parks". Anne said there is a lack of infrastructure for safe cycling (on roadways) within the County, Amy said the Complete Streets Policy should help with this. Barbara recently awarded a Complete Streets study to a consultant that should be completed in April/May, with particular focus in front of Mahopac schools.
- Action: **Access to Public Transit** – Transportation website should get us a few points. Croton Falls Shuttle counts towards shuttle system to train station. Barbara mentioned that the ADA Sidewalk project was constructed to specifically encourage access to transit stops (one by the DBS Campus and Peaceable Hill Rd.). Car parking near train stations and park & rides are easily documentable.
- Action: **Climate Vulnerability Assessment** – This priority action would be a bit difficult to fulfill, and therefore will most likely not be feasible for this certification round. We already meet the priority actions requirement with Complete Streets Policy, Community GHG Inventory, and Govt. Building Energy Audits.
- Action: **Climate Resilient HMP** – BES completed in 2021 and approved by FEMA, already uploaded to CS portal.
- Action: **Cooling Centers** – Might be missing a small amount of documentation, but screenshots from social media sites have been uploaded to the portal.
- Action: **Conserve Natural Areas** – Completed with 131-acre (4 parcel) acquisition.
- Action: **Culverts and Dams** – Neal mentioned the Peekskill Hollow culvert project. Barbara noted that we have a culvert assessment and dam inventory. Neal is working on the 'remove one dam' project. Need before/after pictures and descriptions of the reason for re-design from DPW. Neal

mentioned the Stump Pond/Ludingtonville Rd. Access for DEC (decommissioning). Will need this within the next month. There are 83 culverts within the county. PDF format is preferable.

- Action: **Farmers Markets** – This action is completed and contains an additional link to Sustainable Putnam’s website with the map of locations.
- Action: **Local Climate Action Website** – Ilona met with Brian Austin (IT Dept.) on Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> to go over how to edit the website. A lot of the documentation will need to be uploaded to the website once finalized for public outreach/involvement.
- Action: **Social Media** – This action may be removed for now but will be established after the certification deadline.

Ilona estimated that the points we have thus far should be around 172 which leaves us a nice cushion if we need to remove some actions.

Ilona requested more information about the Repair Cafes from J. Montuori and Amy. Since there was only a spoken conversation between the Mahopac School's superintendent and Amy, it may be hard to swing this action without written documentation. Joe noted that two previous events are required for this action, but SP’s first official event was in Dec. 2023 and the next one isn’t scheduled until March 9<sup>th</sup>. Amy mentioned a previous repair event at Grace Lutheran Church and Joe mentioned the event organized by the Cold Spring Farmer’s Market at an Earth Day celebration. Going forward, these events can be incorporated into the Putnam County/Sustainable Putnam MOU. Barbara mentioned that hosting an event at the County Fair may be a good idea, Joe said there are enough repair volunteers but having people bring in broken items to a large, crowded space would be difficult. Joe mentioned hosting pop-up events for limited items such as just lamps or sewing machines. Amy asked Joe if the cafes take Bluetooth speakers, yes but the success rate is not great.

### 3. **Discuss/Review: Information Requested along with Meeting Invite**

- Action: **NRI** – Max was able to send Ilona Philipstown's and Putnam Valley’s NRIs. Anne sent Ilona Kent’s NRI. Not going to submit for this action this time as 2-3 inventories are 10+ years old. Barbara asked Shawn when Patterson’s last Comprehensive Plan was completed, he confirmed that it was 2000 and needs updating. Rich Williams (Patterson Supervisor) was able to send Ilona a map that was also included in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. Ilona will look into whether or not this CS action requires a singular compressed inventory (all towns in one PDF) or if individual ones can be uploaded. This can be a priority action for next time. Copies of all 2000-2023 inventories will also be uploaded to the County’s CS website.

### 4. **Other Business/Comments**

- Joe M. emailed Ilona regarding the Community Solar Campaign. This action will need to be revisited in April as February and March are too busy. Ilona will reach out to Eleanor for more information. Joe mentioned that if other towns are interested in hosting an event, then the County can feed off theirs. Barbara said this would be perfect to advertise on social media. Anne asked Joe if they allow “double dipping” for grant funding if the thresholds of enrollment are reached, Joe confirmed yes, they allow it but check with Eleanor first. Joe recalled that Kent and Putnam Valley hosted campaigns years ago and Putnam County was allowed to claim their enrollments according to Lauri Taylor (previous coordinator) and Eleanor. Ilona asked whether or not these campaigns are for municipal buildings with solar selling excess back to community members and Joe said no it is more for customers getting their utilities from small solar farms within the utility area (NYSEG region). There are no solar farms within Putnam but there are within NYSEG territory. Anne mentioned that Melanie is looking into mitigating methane emissions from capped landfills and

determining whether those would be good solar sites. Joe said Philipstown is looking into this as well. Jennifer mentioned the State Superfund Site in Patterson on Cornwall Hill Rd., Shawn confirmed that there are solar panels on the property over the capped landfill. There is already a contract in place where the energy gets sold to one buyer (not the town unfortunately).

- Sustainable Putnam was trying to plan an Earth Day celebration but there are not enough volunteers right now. Joe mentioned hosting a small event at the Tilly Foster Farm restaurant (sustainability related trivia/bingo with prizes). The Putnam County Land Trust is also hosting a dinner on April 20th that may interfere with the event. Ilona offered to volunteer and advertise on the County's Climate Smart website.
- The CCE Seedling Sale is coming up soon, the website will be live within the next week or two and pick-up will be in late April. All orders will be placed online.
- Ilona, Shawn, Vicky D., Eleanor, and Melanie met to discuss the Municipal Solid Waste reporting issue that was brought up at the last Task Force meeting. The conclusion was that there may have been (unintentional) false reporting by AAA Carting because the Putnam/Westchester lines can be a bit blurred. Additionally, Shawn said that when they drop off waste at the Wheelabrator facility, they have no way of knowing if that waste is coming from Putnam or Westchester by the way it is reported from AAA. These numbers were included in the Community GHG Inventory. Shawn said any of the numbers we get from carting companies are highly suspect and not very reliable, it's mostly a best guess estimate.
- Happy Groundhog Day, an early Spring is on the way!

Meeting adjourned at 11:06 AM