

Minutes to the Village of Ardsley Conservation and Environmental Advisory Committee (CEAC), 12/3/20, 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Attendees: Mayor Nancy Kaboolian, Asha Bencosme, Trustee Steve Edelstein, Michael Fischgrund, Eda Kapsis (facilitator), Lorraine Kuhn, Dave Lew, Carol Sommerfield (minutes), Glenn Weinberg

Honored Guests: Westchester County Executive George Latimer; Peter McCartt, Director of Energy Conservation and Sustainability

Opening (Michael)

“The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing.” -Albert Einstein

Updates from the County Executive (George Latimer)

Summary:

- All eyes are on CLCPA and Westchester is pursuing many opportunities to reduce greenhouse gasses. For example:
 - Westchester bus fleets provide an opportunity to electrify and cut carbon emissions
 - Food scrap recycling is also an important conservation effort and will reduce carbon and methane emissions
 - Energy demand reduction and solarization are key county initiatives
- We all need to assertively pursue opportunities in Westchester for GHG reduction. All ideas are welcome and should be communicated to the County Executive's office. The county and municipalities are in a partnership to realize tangible improvements and build a sustainable future.

Updates from the Director of Energy Conservation and Sustainability (Peter McCartt)

Summary:

- There is a major focus on transportation for GHG reduction because it is a big driver of emissions. Initiatives underway:
 - Electrifying the government fleet
 - Bringing on more EV vehicles and charging stations (e.g. parks)
 - Decreasing demand
 - Adding solar to public buildings, e.g. solarizing bus depots. Adding solar will occur in two phases.
- The Food Scrap program is also a key initiative.

Actions:

1. Send further information on the Solar phases and project to Eda. **Peter McCartt**

Ardsley CAN by 2030! (Dave)

1. The program was kicked off on November 9 and a banner was installed the same week in the center of town.
2. There are currently a total of 36 participants over the two zoom sessions scheduled for December 9 and December 14 from 7 pm – 8 pm. At present Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins has enrolled in one of the sessions.
3. Preliminary work has begun on the next zoom session, to be delivered in early February. The next session will focus on reducing home heating GHG emissions.
4. GREEN Growing monthly communications have been sent via e-mail blast since April, 2020. A new communication will appear in December, GREEN Living. This communication stream will focus on conservation and carbon reduction and will alternate monthly with GREEN Growing.
5. A final 'dress rehearsal' for the Zoom session will occur on Monday evening, December 7 from 7:30 – 8:45.
6. A Facebook page and Instagram account for the CEAC has been approved and will be rolled out during 1Q21. The CEAC has reactivated its Twitter feed.

New York State Energy Programs/Projects (Asha & Eda)

Asha made special mention of Carol Sommerfield's contributions in the creation of the Ardsley CAN by 2030! campaign, the GREEN Growing & GREEN Living series. Carol has been instrumental in driving these initiatives forward.

NYS Energy programs/projects (Asha):

1. CLCPA is no longer a number of goals but are now requirements and communities must comply. One of the program's goals is to reduce GHG emissions 40% by 2030. We are in good shape because **Ardsley CAN by 2030!** exceeds that goal, targeting a 50% reduction by that deadline.
2. It is expected that there will be a major transition in the transportation area to EVs.
3. Ardsley is a Clean Energy Community (CEC) and is exploring the actions needed to become a Climate Smart Community (CSC).
4. Next steps and grant opportunities are being identified and assessed. Grant opportunities primarily relates to maintaining the CEC designation and taking on additional CEC high impact actions.
5. On December 11, a subset of the CEAC will be touring potential sites for an EV charging station through the BLINK/Sustainable Westchester/ConEd program.
6. An opportunity for clean energy is the new DPW building. Asha is investigating potential grant/incentive programs that could be applied to finance climate friendly features and will bring that information back to the Village.

Low Carbon Concrete:

Eda provided an update on low carbon concrete and two opportunities in this area: passing a non-binding resolution to use low carbon concrete to encourage contractors to use this type of concrete, and use of low carbon concrete during the building of the DPW building. There may also be some opportunity for use of this type of concrete at the schools.

The potential for solar farms on school and commercial buildings in Ardsley was also discussed. Additionally, solar charging EV stations on commercial property may be worth investigation.

Mayor Kaboolian suggested that Concord Road school may be due for a new roof and could look into solar roof panels at that point. Concord Road school had plans pre-pandemic to build solar parking canopy panels with a 2017 bond but construction has not commenced.

Actions:

1. Investigate the possibility and feasibility of using commercial parking lots for EV charging stations. **Eda and Nancy**
2. Assess the opportunity to gain purchasing power through involving other municipalities in the purchase of low carbon concrete. **Peter McCartt and Eda**
3. Investigate the potential of adding solar panels to the school roofs. **Asha, Eda and Michael to follow-up.** *Committee convened afterwards and decided given the CEAC's current priorities, we will not be able to pursue this inquiry at this time.*

Ardsley Pollinator Pathway Project (Carol)

Carol provide a summary of milestones met and next steps:

- The Pollinator Pathway project website, version 1 is now complete. It is being reviewed by the CEAC team. Much gratitude goes out the Hastings-on-Hudson Pollinator Pathway team who provided the template to create the website, saving weeks of work.
- Meetings have been held with all Rivertowns Pollinator Pathway Chairs and collaboration and sharing is ongoing.
- A meeting was held with Linda Keil (President, Ardsley Garden Club) and a partnership between the Garden Club and the upcoming Pollinator Pathway project is beginning.
- On December 21 the following will be presented to Mayor Kaboolian and Trustee Edelstein for their review, feedback and approval to proceed:
 - Pollinator Pathway mission, strategy and milestone plan
 - Communication plan
 - Website
 - Draft communications

Works in Process/Updates (Glenn/Lorraine)

Open Space Inventory

- Glenn provided an update on the project, including GIS maps. He is currently drawing from various sources to understand the land of interest in Ardsley and will be following CAC guidelines on categorizing parcels, as well as performing a gap analysis.

Watershed and GIS Conferences

- Lorraine provided updates from the watershed/stormwater/environmental meetings she has recently attended. She also provided an update on Saw Mill Coalition's work with the County to improve River Access opportunities at V.E. Macy Park. Upgrade of the small parcel of land along the Saw Mill River at Bridge Street was also discussed.

Other/Open Discussion

Peter McCartt plans to get a conference on the schedule around April for all Westchester CACs to facilitate sharing of best practices, communicate what's working/what's not working, and to convey initiatives.

Closing (Eda)

Next CEAC meeting (open to the public) will be February 4, 2021 from 7 pm – 8 pm via Zoom. CEAC weekly working meetings are held Tuesdays from 1:00 – 2:30.

Adjournment (Michael)

Michel provided the closing quote:

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.” -The Lorax