

To: Claverack Town Council  
From: John Bradley, Climate Smart Coordinator  
Re: Report for September 9, 2021

### **County Climate Smart Solar Campaign and Claverack:**

The County Climate Smart Task Force received BOS approval to implement a Community Solar Campaign for the entire County. The County's initiative offers us an opportunity to initiate a campaign of our own at the same time, with benefits in efficiency and financial rewards:

- **Benefits** - The Community Solar is a promotional campaign at the local level to assist residents to voluntarily select a solar electric provider for service. The program typically provides a 10% discount. Some provider also give a \$100 bonus to enrollees and a similar bonus to the town's Climate Smart Fund. NYS Climate Smart also provide a grant upon completion of the campaign - \$15,000 for registering at least 25 new customers.
- **Work Load** - A Community Solar Campaign is a good bit of work for a Climate Smart Committee, requiring an RFP for solar providers, a Scoping document, and a plan of action. The County CSC intends to collaborate with the local Climate Smart Committees. If a local CSC has its own Community Solar, the financial rewards are shared with the town, otherwise they go to the County. Much of this application and planning work can draw on the County or other towns' campaigns. Thus this is a propitious time for Claverack to start a Community Solar campaign.
- **Capability** - Our CSC agreed to initiate a Community Solar campaign, with the expectation that we will recruit additional volunteers for when the workload picks up in a few months. We are also exploring a collaboration with the Philmont Climate Smart. If we do not have the volunteers to execute the plan, we can cede it to the County
- **Board Action** - Once the scoping document and its work plan is completed, the Town B Board will need to review and approve or modify the plan.
- **Issues to resolve** - Market Timing, County relationship

### **The New Town Hall, a Green Building Goal**

In our July Climate Smart Report, we made a recommendation to adopt the highest level of energy efficient standards in planning the new Town Hall. Today we focus on the WHY and the HOW:

- In July, we emphasized the opportunity to achieve Bronze Certification by incorporating Climate Smart Actions in planning and building the new town hall.
- The report emphasized those Climate Smart actions that reward good planning and design practices and the application of very high standards of energy efficiency and sustainability.
- There are many economic, environmental, and quality of life benefits for the community in planning for the highest level of sustainability:
  - Save money and energy - Use less energy and reduce living/operating costs with lower utility bills, savings last long into the future.
  - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reliance on fossil fuels; Use renewables.
  - Property values are increased.
  - A community is more sustainable when there are more energy efficient buildings;

- Green design Improves quality of life in the community. The 5 acre site has the potential to be a stunning green public space and amenity for the town.
- Green design serves as a model for the town and other communities. Lead by example,
- To achieve the best outcomes for the Town Hall, start with a commitment to a sustainable, energy efficient, resilient, green building complex and good planning; There are several options for HOW to achieve the Green Building Goal:
  - Adopt a building code such as LEEDS (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) or other code system recommended by NYSERDA.
  - A minimal improvement would be to build to NYStretch Code which will be in effect in 2023; Philmont adopted the StretchNY code specifically to improve its community, to upgrade its housing stock and increase its tax base
  - Good design is an outcome of planning; it ties together and finds the balance among the many requirements the town has for developing this site. Many needs for the town's business functions have been identified. And many activities and amenities have been and will be suggested for the overall site. The site with its natural beauty (falls, creek, naturally cooling wooded area, and mill ruins) can be a unique and distinctive amenity for the town. A good planning and design process helps sort through these many considerations and find a balanced solution.
  - A first step is to hire an architect with extensive experience with sustainable, high performance green buildings and with managing complex public projects..
  - Planning gives you better control and reduces waste and error

Building a new town hall and redeveloping this 5 acre site is a generational opportunity. We need to take a long term perspective:

- How will this project add to the quality of life of our community?
- Claverack is competing with smaller towns with more diverse amenities to serve and attract residents and businesses - such as Chatham, Hillsdale, Copake, and others;
- The Town Hall site has a spectacularly beautiful natural area with the Falls, Creek, paper mill ruins, and cool wooded area nestled next to the conservation area. A nature park along this basin would be a stand-out amenity that would delight town residents of all ages for generations to come;
- Planning is not easy; it is about figuring what we want and how to do it; A failure to plan effectively and misuse this opportunity could leave us with a so-so outcome that will define our community for decades to come.
- A good design process helps the town find an appropriate balance among these multiple interests.

“The biggest risk is not that we aim too high and miss it. It’s that we aim too low and reach it.” - often attributed to Michelangelo