

Summary of CSC 9/29/21 Meeting, 5:30-7 PM, Claverack Library

Attendance:

Present: J. Bradley, Elizabeth Davis, Eric DeFeo, Tom Ferguson, Sarah Katan, Cherry Lewis, Victoria Masters,
Tech Guest: David Baylen
Excused: Katy Cashen, Jeff Kiplinger, Josh Nislich, Richard Wieninger

The Claverack Climate Smart Committee opened with an orientation and introductions for new volunteers.

- For orientation, John reviewed the posters on “Envisioning the Town Hall Site” and the proposed Nature and Historic Area in the creek basin and the committee’s deliberations leading to recommendation for a green town hall and planning for the site
- Numerous factors came into play as the committee met to study the situation: the certification framework, climate action planning process, the implementation of the Greenhouse Gas Inventory, and recommendation of opportunities to reduce emissions. The result of the Climate Action Planning was the report, the Path to Bronze certification. The Path to Bronze contained specific recommendations for the town to design the new town hall to the highest level of energy efficiency, including the use of hydropower and other renewable energy.
- The committee recognized that the Pledge Element #6 ‘Climate Smart Land Use’ also provides guidance for this type of project and it is appropriate to consider sustainability in the context of the 5-acre site and surrounding neighborhood which includes the High Falls Conservation Area.

The background and status of the CSC’s outreach Communications was summarized and discussed at length.

- Since its formation in fall of 2020, there were limited avenues for outreach to the community to recruit volunteers. Since there is no town newsletter, word of mouth, announcements on the town website and articles posted on IMBY were used. By the end of 2020, these efforts had attracted 4 volunteers - Jeff Kiplinger, Kathleen Proper, Imre Varga, and Richard Weninger, joining Councilperson Katy Cashen and Coordinator John Bradley.
- By late summer of 2021, a series of articles had been posted on IMBY to publicize Climate Smart and the committee’s progress around hydropower, Climate Action planning, and Greenhouse Gas Reductions for town buildings.. Although Kathleen had set up a Facebook page for the CSC, all new volunteers were from word of mouth. And when Kathleen stepped down, the development of the CSC’s outreach capability ceased. Efforts to develop a google groups mailing list also faltered for lack of volunteers.
- John reported that he and Vic would be tabling at the Churchtown Dairy’s Harvest Festival on Oct 10 to publicize the CSC and its recommendations

- The need for a functioning website and outreach capability was discussed. Vic Masters reported that she had just set up a website for the CSC and with a team could build it out and also develop a Mail Chimp listserv. Sarah Katan and Eric DeFeo volunteered to join the communications team.
- John reported that the Columbia County Climate Smart Task Force (CC CSC) had organized a virtual meeting of all the Climate Smart Coordinators across the County to discuss common interests and collaboration. He reported that several towns were collaborating on a series for Repair Cafes and on community composting. It was mentioned that there is interest in these initiatives in Claverack and hopefully we will eventually have volunteers for us to participate in these projects.
- The County CSC is initiating a Community Solar campaign to enroll residents as customers of local solar farms. With the CC CSC doing the hard work of issuing an RFP and selecting the vendors, our town's CSC can participate just by writing and submitting its own scoping document (marketing plan). The benefit to Claverack is a \$5,000 grant from NYSERDA when 10 new customers are enrolled, plus there is 'signing' bonus for each new customer and the CSC. Josh Nislich has volunteered to coordinate this initiative and Cherry Lewis volunteered to help. John said he will check with another volunteer who might be interested in helping also. Hopefully we can report this to the Town Board in November and then be a part of this CC CSC campaign.
- The report on the Town Hall Planning and GHG Inventory and Reductions recommendations was deferred to the next month's meeting. John did report that a Town Garage Tour was planned for the 'Tech Team' with the Superintendent of Highways to learn about the sustainability of the Town garage and see if the group can be helpful. The Tour will probably be on Oct 15 and will be reported at the next meeting.

Proposed Agenda distributed Oct 22, 2021:

Proposed Agenda Claverack Climate Smart Meeting on Wednesday Sept 29, 2021, 5:30 - 7 PM at the Claverack Free Library (Zoom available);

- 5:30-6 PM Meet and orient for new volunteers
- See display on Envisioning the New Town Hall Site

6 PM Regular Meeting:

Update on Climate Action Planning (CAP):

Re-envisioning the Town Hall and 5 acre Site

Columbia County Climate Smart (CC CSC)

Communications:

- Outreach & Recruiting

Background Notes:

CSC and Conservation - a call for interest (item deferred to a future meeting)

For volunteers with a particular interest in conservation, I hope to eventually initiate a discussion of how the CSC can further the conservation cause in Claverack. There are stark deficiencies as regards conservation in Claverack. The comprehensive plan is long overdue for an update. There are numerous sustainability and climate change issues that need to be addressed in the Plan. We expect a planning committee to be formed in 2022 and we want climate smart issues on the agenda.

Also, Claverack does not have a Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) which needs to be appointed by the Town Board. It was a recommendation of the 2008 Comp Plan. In other towns, the CAC plays a lead role in monitoring and addressing conservation issues. In particular, the CACs provide important support to the Planning Board. CACs in turn are supported by the Columbia Land Conservancy.

There are several Climate Smart Pledge Elements that focus on these issues:

PE6. Implement climate-smart land use.

PE7. Enhance community resilience to climate change.

Climate Smart Pledge and actions can be reviewed at

<https://climatesmart.ny.gov/actions-certification/actions/>

Hudson River Valley Greenway has grants for Comp Planning

Clav's 2008 Comprehensive Plan has multiple recommendations in this area. Most have been ignored, including an Open Space Plan and a CAC.