

Monroe County Climate Action Plan Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

via zoom

October 1, 2020 (3:30 – 5:00 p.m.)

Drafted: October 2, 2020

Approved: November 5, 2020

Members: John Botelho, Fred Ancello, Matthew O'Connor, Michael Yudelson, Sue Hughes-Smith, Kathryn McArdle, Leah Wirley, Helen Frank, Liam Smith

Absent: Karla Boyce

Staff: Mike Garland, Tina Stevens, Joe VanKerkhove, Miles Cunning, Patrick Gooch

Guests: Andy Raus (Bergmann), Kimberly Baptiste (Bergmann), Jayme Thomann (Bergmann), Robert D'abadie (Michael Baker)

Welcome, Introduction and Announcements (Co-Chair O'Connor):

Meeting called to order at 3:33 P.M. by Co-Chair O'Connor.

Approval of Minutes (Co-Chair O'Connor):

Minutes from the September 3, 2020 meeting were unanimously approved. Motion by Co-Chair Yudelson; seconded by Fred Ancello.

Review of Bergmann Associates Draft Scope of Work – Phase 1 of Monroe County Climate Action Plan (Joe Vankerkhove / Bergmann Associates):

1. Kimberly Baptiste of Bergmann described Phase 1 of the Monroe County Action Plan, which will focus on identifying strategies and recommendations for Monroe County facilities and operations to:
 - Project Team will facilitate monthly (or more frequent as needed) project status and review meetings with the County's internal CAP working group. This group will consist of members from the County Administration, and the following County Departments: Environmental Services, Planning, DOT, Parks, Airport, Finance, and HR, with as only needed inputs / attendance from the remaining County Departments.
 - Members of our Project Team will attend scheduled, monthly meetings of the Climate Action Plan Advisory Committee. Objectives will include refining project vision, setting measurable goals and objectives, review existing information, confirm targets, review and assist with identification of strategies and recommendations, and assist with prioritization of implementation activities.
 - The Project Team will meet with County officials to understand the overall vision for the Phase 1 process and help to establish an overall vision and measurable goals for the project.
 - Stakeholder meetings will be held with County staff representing various County departments, focusing on those with direct knowledge and insights of County facilities and / or operations. These meetings will provide an opportunity to gather information on existing data and operations, as well as ideas for future sustainability enhancements and upcoming projects.
 - Stakeholder meetings with outside organizations or agencies that have a direct relationship to County operations and/or the goals of this planning process. The Stormwater Coalition and Environmental Management Council are examples of other potential stakeholders.
2. Robert D'Abadie (Bergmann – Michael Baker) spoke about a GHG inventory and baseline. Ulster County is seen as a model for Climate Action Plans throughout NYS.
 - ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability – is seen as a model for local governments. CLEI USA's ClearPath, a platform is the world's most widely-used tool for calculating community-scale GHG inventories, forecasts, and climate action plans. Their Local Government Operations Protocol is a framework for calculating GHG inventories.
 - The EPA Protocol is similar, but with a few twists, and would be a third option.
 - Climate Smart certification can be an early action goal, and their classification lists alternatives and programs and includes a points system. Bronze and Silver are the levels, and the point qualifications double.
 - It is important to understand the target and County objectives and align with others. Everything will be aligned with helping the County to meet desired metrics. Understanding the target and the County objectives are very important.
3. Kim Baptiste discussed various certification programs. She also mentioned that there needs to be internal communication strategies developed to disseminate the purpose of the programs, and deliverables to be compiled and commented on.

4. Timeline for Phase 1, County operations is seen to be 9-12 months.
5. Mike Garland said that a list would be shared with Bergmann of County facilities and areas of responsibility.
6. Matt O'Connor asked that all operational definitions be well-defined and agreed upon.
7. John Bothelho asked about models: do they provide bounds of scope for inventories? Robert said the ICLEI protocol defines the boundaries well.
8. Liam Smith asked for an explanation of the path for the Scope through the Legislature. Mike Yudelson stated that the Legislature is responsible for approving new agreements and any funding required. The unanimous Legislature vote which formed the Climate Action Committee charged them with development of a plan, with a final report to the Legislature. Kim stated that this effort will require approval by the Legislature to enact.
9. Liam also asked about the status of the Climate Smart Communities Legislation. Mike Yudelson reported it will be voted on at the October 13 Legislature meeting.
10. Kate McArdle asked about the inter-department team that will be required to develop the Phase 1 County plan. Mike Garland stated that working team would be cross-functional and hold monthly working meetings, separate from the CAP committee. This internal team would be composed similar to past committees and include representatives from Bergmann. All information will be shared with the CAP. Mike Yudelson asked about Phase 1: will it be enhancing existing County programs or a brand new program? Mike Garland stated that previous programs would be evaluated as a starting point; new programs would be subject to acceptance by the County administration. Kim Baptiste said Bergmann has the existing County framework; these programs would be evaluated, leveraged and taken to the next level.
11. Sue Hughes-Smith stated that most other plans from throughout NYS were formulated before the NYS Climate Law was enacted; the Monroe County plan should be aligned with that law, which includes being 80% fossil fuel free / net zero by 2050.
12. Joe Vankerkhove asked the Committee to consider a quick approval of the provided Scope of Work as it needs to get to the Legislature for the November legislative cycle. Liam asked if the Phase 2 Scope was available and Joe said not as yet due to the need for baseline info to be gathered. Joe indicated that the revised and approved Phase 1 Scope should be sent back to him no later than Tuesday, October 6 to insure legislative deadlines are met.

Review New Monroe County Climate Action Plan Website (Mike Garland):

1. Committee reviewed the new Climate Action website, currently housed within the Department of Environmental Services website on www.monroecounty.gov. The website will house all information pertinent to the committee, including meeting recordings and minutes.
2. The County website is being redesigned to include a mobile-friendly interface.
3. Climate Action website will be updated regularly and includes a link for those interested to email the committee. Emails are delivered to Tina Stevens.
4. A link will be placed on the County homepage to the Climate Action Plan. Tina Stevens will address this with County IT.

Energize NY Open C-Pace Program Discussion (Mike Garland):

1. Monroe County has reviewed this program twice in the past. The program provides financing for private and NFP's to provide energy improvements to their buildings. The program has been recently modified to include opportunities that were not previously available, including the fact that if the secured property is sold, the loan for improvements can be transferred to the new property owner. The property owner is the borrower. Mike said that the financial risk to the County was much higher in previous versions.
2. The program requires an LDC (Local Development Corporation). LDC's have been problematic in the past. There is no financial risk to the County with this arrangement.
3. A unique feature of the program is that 100% of a project can be funded by competitive private lenders.
4. Many NYS Counties are already a part of the program.
5. John Botelho asked where the lien on this loan fell for a property. Mike Garland stated that property taxes and the mortgage were above this lien.
6. To participate, County would have to pass a law and sign an intermunicipal agreement.
7. It was suggested by Sue Hughes-Smith that the program be recommended via letter to the President of the Legislature that the CAP recommends evaluation of Energize NY Open C-Pace and Monroe County participation in the program. Motion by Mike Yudelson; second by Matt O'Connor. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Forum:

1. No public comments or requests to speak were received.
2. Mike Yudelson asked about programs to provide HVAC to organizations where repayment is tied to savings from increased energy efficiencies. Sue Hughes-Smith said C-PACE was structured for businesses and not-for-profits. Kate McArdle offered to look into this.

New Business:

1. Next meeting is Thursday, November 5 at 3:30, via Zoom. Link will be sent out one week prior.
2. Liam Smith asked about timelines for Phase 1 and 2; 9-12 months is the expected timeline for Phase 1. Sue commented that she thought that by that time New York State will have released their plan, which could help with Phase 2. Kate McArdle stated that with 40 vacancies in the NYS Climate Action Office and funding challenges, NYS will not be moving quickly.
3. Matt said that the CAP Committee was charged to come up with a plan in one year; Mike Garland said that timeframe, given today's challenges, is not realistic and can be revisited in conjunction with the Legislature. Phase 2 will be unique and require a great deal of public input and participation. Mike Yudelson asked if there were Phase 2 steps that could be done in parallel with Phase 1, and asked for input from the young adults on the committee. Kim Baptiste noted that there is no reason Phase 2 cannot run parallel to Phase 1, which provides the foundation and the building blocks for the program. Pat Gooch said that Phase 2 is much like a Comprehensive Plan, which would not go through the same processes as Phase 2 as Phase 1 is strictly internal. The Committee chairs volunteered to discuss with Legislative leadership a commitment to resources.
4. Joe Vankerkhove asked the Committee to consider a quick approval of the provided Scope of Work as it needs to get to the Legislature for the November legislative cycle. Liam asked if the Phase 2 Scope was available and Joe said not as yet due to the need for baseline info to be gathered.
5. Sue said that Monroe County is the only county that is not currently a NYS Clean Energy Community. Kate stated it was in the plan. Sue suggested NYS Clean Energy certification be the November meeting topic.

Motion to adjourn by Kate McArdle; second by Matt O'Connor. Meeting adjourned at 4:43PM.

Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, November 5 at 3:30 P.M.