

Monroe County Climate Action Plan Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

via zoom

September 3, 2020 (3:30 – 5:00 p.m.)

Drafted: September 4, 2020

Approved: October 1, 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: Jack Moffitt, Mike Garland, Tina Stevens, Joe VanKerkhove, Miles Cuning, Patrick Gooch

Guests:

Welcome, Introduction and Announcements (Jack Moffitt):

Meeting called to order at 3:30 P.M. by Jack Moffitt, followed by Roll Call.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes from the inaugural meeting of August 13, 2020 were unanimously approved.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair (Jack Moffitt):

1. Nominations were received for Co-Chairs: Matt O'Connor and Michael Yudelson, Both of who will share the duties of the Chairperson. Nomination by Fred Ancello; second by Sue Hughes-Smith. Passed unanimously.
2. Nominations for Vice-Chair: a nomination from Kate McArdle was received. Kate declined, nominating Sue Hughes-Smith. Second from Fred Ancello; passed unanimously.

City of Rochester Climate Action Plan (Ann Spaulding, Manager, Environmental Quality, City of Rochester):

1. The City has actually formulated three plans: Municipal Climate Action Plan in 2013, NYPA Five Cities Energy Plan in 2015, and a Community-wide Climate Action Plan in 2016.
2. Plan Development Process for the Community CAP included NYSERDA Cleaner Greener Communities Program Grant. City team included Department of Environmental Services, Neighborhood and Business Development, the Mayor's Office and the Office of Innovation. Consultant team was Bergmann Associates and the Brendle Group.
3. Stakeholder group included Monroe County, the U of R, RIT, Local non-profits, RG&E, Rochester Community Foundation, various transportation groups including GRCC and GTC, Pathstone, NeighborWorks, Rochester Regional Health and the Rochester Housing Authority.
4. The plan development process included a greenhouse gas inventory, three stakeholder meetings that included a process overview, target reduction goal setting, mitigation strategies and implementation actions, and a draft plan review. Public was included in an outreach survey, tabling, and an open house. Also included were Mayor and City Council Briefings, and City Council was asked to adopt the plan. It was subsequently included as part of the Rochester 2034 Comprehensive Plan.
5. Goals and Strategies for the plan included: Target reductions of 20% municipal from 2008 with that becoming the baseline by 2020; and Community, 20% reduction from 2010 baseline by 2020 and a 40% reduction by 2030.
6. Climate mitigation strategies included energy efficiencies; renewable energy; fuel switching; VM[I/T reduction; alternative fuel vehicles and waste reduction and diversion.
7. Implementation plan actions included: municipal facility energy audits; municipal energy efficiency retrofits; alternative fuel vehicle adoption, including municipal fleet conversions, ROC EV accelerator community and Public EV Charging Stations; renewable energy at the Arnett Library, Public Market and 1655 Lexington Avenue at the Solar Field.
8. Other implementation actions included: LED Streetlight replacements, participation in the PACE financing program, a composting study and pilot, green infrastructure including rain gardens, green roofs, porous pavement/tree pits. Community outreach implementation included solarize, clean heating and cooling, and CCA.
9. Municipal Facilities Energy Reduction included participation in the US Department of Energy Better Buildings Programs; 4 millions square feet of facilities; 23% energy reduction from 2009 baseline; corresponding reduction of over 4,000 tons CO₂e; and a new GHG inventory planned for 2021.
10. Renewable energy products include: Arnett Library PV (44K system installed in 2010); Public Market PV (15 KW system installed in 2012); and 1655 Lexington Avenue Solar Field (2 mW system installed in December of 2017).
11. Public vehicle EV charging stations; 24 ports installed in 2014 with NYSERDA and CMAQ funding at seven locations: City Hall (20: Sister Cities Garage (4); Washington Square Garage (4); East End Garage (4); Court Street Garage (4); Public Market (2); Port of Rochester (4). 12 new/additional ports were installed in 2018 at five locations: Cobbs Hill Park (2); Genesee Valley Park (2); Charlotte Library (2); High Falls Garage (4) and the Public Market (2).

12. LED Streetlight program Phase 1 (2016-2017): 3931 fixtures replaced; 72% energy reduction (2,403,000 kWh); \$252,000 annual energy cost savings and a \$30,000 annual savings on maintenance. 2018 was Phase 2: 9,585 were replace; 71% energy reduction (5,132,000 kWh); \$539,000 annual energy cost savingsl \$72,000 annual maintenance cost savings. Both phases combined provided 40% overall streetlight system energy reduction – 7.5 million kWh. This is from 18.7 million kWh hours in 2015 to 11.2 million kWh in 2019. This resulted in an annual decrease of 6,153 tons of CO2e.

13. Lessons learned included:

- Bring together a good representation of stakeholders
- Be aspirational in target setting
- Community input in plan development
- Understand what you can and cannot control
- Look for funding opportunities
- Be flexible and prepared to update plan as needed
- Have system in place to monitor and measure results

Mike Yudelson asked about how the Board was able to be active with the consultants. Ann stated that the City had their own team that worked with the consultants and they would take matters to stakeholder groups, and that the consultant and their sub-consultant were crucial to the process.

Matt O'Connor asked about the role of youth. Ann stated that the City would include youth in planning but did not specifically have them in stakeholder groups.

The question was also asked about City residents appreciating and responding to the work. Ann said she felt that the work with City Communication was a mixed bag, however there were great results to the online survey and the community Open House.

Mike Garland asked about using 2008 as a baseline for GHG. Anne said GHG were tallied under two different grant programs: municipal – energy efficiency and a Berck Grant. Community wide studies were done with the help of NYSERDA. CCAs are handled exclusively by residents. City government is not a part; entities can opt in. Residents are auto-enrolled if served by RG&E. Other residents may opt in. The County has a municipal ESCO and has had it for over 20 years.

John Bothelo asked about the GHG process. Ann said cooperation from utilities is critical for energy use data. This must be done by sector – residential, industrial, etc. It is difficult to obtain this data only within the City limits. Gasoline and diesel usage can be obtained from the Genesee Regional Transportation Council.

Matt O'Connor asked about technology. Ann said it is easy to incentivize and encourage new construction. The City is hard because of the amount of old homes it contains. They continue to look for ways to incentivize developers. Rental properties involve educating landlords and makes this difficult. This is a nationwide problem.

Mike Garland asked about new NYS mandates that no longer allow natural gas to be included in new construction that will have a community-wide impact.

Sue Hughes complimented the City process and suggested that the County group look for people who were not included at the table.

Mike Garland stated this group would be working in parallel with a group that is studying and evaluating County operations.

Monroe County Climate Action Plan RFP Review / Discussion (Mike Garland):

1. Mike Garland introduced Pat Gooch, Senior Planner from the Monroe County Planning Department, who will be part of this process and a staff member of the committee.
2. Mike announced that Bergmann Associates had been selected through the County's Consultant Selection process as the consultant to formulate the County's Climate Action Plan. Since Bergmann was also the consultant the City of Rochester used, there will be many take-aways and learnings that can be immediately brought to the table. There were five responses to the RFP. Kim Baptiste will be the project manager for Bergmann.
3. County personnel will work with Bergmann to develop the Scope of Work, and the Climate Action Advisory Board will be given two opportunities for input on drafts. Bergmann will also be invited to participate in Climate Action Board meetings.
4. It is hoped that the first draft of the Scope will be available for the October 1 meeting. November will be finalizing the scope and fee and developing a Legislative Referral; Referral will enter the Legislative cycle in the 4th quarter of 2020 for review and approval.
5. Funds are currently set aside for this project for 2020 / 2021, with the hope that the contract will be in place late in 2020 or early in 2021.

Climate Smart Communities Pledge Legislation (Mike Garland):

1. The original Climate Smart Communities Pledge was introduced to the Legislature in April. President Carbone tabled the referral and sent it back to this Committee for input.
2. Climate Smart New York helps local governments take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate. The program offers free technical assistance, grants, and rebates for electric vehicles.
3. Basic premise is that a Community becomes registered and can become certified at a certain level (Gold (under development) / Silver / Bronze – City of Rochester is currently Bronze). Irondequoit and Brighton are currently members. Registration allows application for grant opportunities. Link to website: <https://climatesmart.ny.gov/>
4. Ann Spauding also mentioned the NYSERDA Grant program that had many eligible grant funding programs.
5. Sue Hughes-Smith motioned that the Climate Smart Community Legislation be reintroduced to the County Legislature. Second by Kate McArdle; vote was unanimous.

Public Forum:

1. No public comments were received.
2. Jack Moffitt said that the Climate Action Committee portion of the County website was under design.
3. Mike Yudelson stressed that it is important to receive input from all sectors of the community on this project, especially youth.
4. John Bothelo asked about the impact of Covid on energy baselines. Mike Garland stated that would be under consideration by the consultants, but most likely 2019 would be the most accurate data.

New Business:

1. Next meeting is Thursday, October 1 at 3:30, via Zoom. Link will be sent out one week prior.

Motion to adjourn by Matt O'Connor; second by Kate McArdle. Meeting adjourned at 4:42 PM.