

## Climate Smart Communities Task Force Meeting Minutes

July 1, 2024 Town Hall, New Lebanon

Present: Kristine Cottom, Bob Gilson, Adelia Moore, Frieda Pearce, Elizabeth Poreba, Steve Powers, Cathy Wilkerson

Supervisor Houghtling and 5 community members

The meeting was called to order at 5:01pm and began with a presentation by Alejandro Ramos and Joanna VanFleet, candidates at Cornell University Graduate School of Public Administration. They had 7 recommendations for the Town's FEMA-required **Hazard Mitigation Plan**.

Their 7 recommendations were:

1. Community engagement and education in conjunction with Cornell U Cooperative Extension of Columbia Greene CCECG
2. Shatford Park Creek erosion mitigation
3. installation of emergency power generators in hubs like Town Hall with a solar battery source to provide uninterrupted essential services
4. establishment of a New Lebanon emergency management plan, including coordination protocol of who does what
5. advocating for state-level updates to local flood maps
6. culvert and dam assessment and management
7. finalize landfill closure

They provided implementation steps, possible sources of funding and support for each action. At the Q&A, they were asked if there were other hazards besides flooding considered imminent. They responded that recommendation 3, emergency power generators, could be relevant to other dangers as well. Steve noted that there were plans to use upcoming funds from the CEC for **battery backups for Town Hall**. Asked about the danger of invasive species, the presenters said that was not part of the current plan, but might be considered. They were also asked about the danger of **PFAS** from herbicide-treated seeds. Peg said that none had been found in the water as yet. Cathy pointed out she had PFAS in her water, caused by dumping in her woods. Peg agreed that dumping on private property was a hazard. Cathy suggested that property owners could be educated about the dangers of dumping. Frieda said she would do a poster about this for the Climate Carnival.

After thanking the two Cornell interns, the Taskforce members proceeded to their meeting. Steve reported that the **EV Campaign** has now been completed with 5 EV purchasers in Town. This will earn the town \$5000 and 200 CEC points.

The Town will also earn funds and more points upon installation of additional **heat pumps** in Town Hall. **Battery recycling** has kept 1061 pounds of batteries out to the landfill since its inception. **Plastic recycling** has garnered 416 pounds of plastic film.

Cathy reported that the Columbia County digester was affected by a power surge and will be out of commission for about a month. **Food scrap collections** will continue at Maverick's and the transfer station.

Adelia said the June 8 **Repair Café** in East Nassau was smaller than the previous one, probably because of its location. Lucy Gardiner has joined the group's pr committee. The next Repair Café will take place at the Climate Carnival. She has already lined up 20 fixers and has a goal of

30 because many customers are anticipated. After that, there will be one in New Lebanon on Nov. 16.

Peg reported that Recreation staff has taken charge of some of the **Trees for Tribs** trees, which are doing well. Water testing continues, though she is not sure how long the ARPA funds will go. She is recommending uv filters to well owners because of the increased overall volume of rain in our areas.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:47

The next meeting will be *August 7*

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Poreba