



## Sullivan County Agriculture and Sustainability Policy Committee

August 11, 2016 AGENDA  
12:30 PM

Committee Members:

Catherine Owens, Chair, Nadia Rasjz, Vice-Chair, Mark McCarthy, Terri Ward, Scott Samuelson

### Call to Order

### Attendance

Comments: Committee Chair

Presentation: None

### Reports:

1. Agricultural Report- Melinda Meddaugh
2. Office of Sustainable Energy (OSE) Monthly Report- Carol Roig & Stephen Stuart

### Discussion:

1. C-PACE

Resolutions: None

### Public Comment

### Adjourn

**SC Office of Sustainable Energy (OSE) Activities Report for August 2016**

**Reporting on July 2016**

**I. Zoning for Solar in Sullivan County**

SASD worked with the DPEM to present information on the model solar zoning law. The forum was held on Wednesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> in the legislative hearing room and was well-attended, with planning board and ZBA representatives from Bethel, Cohecton, Delaware, Fallsburg, Highland, Lumberland, Monticello, Rockland, Thompson, Tusten as well as solar developers and representatives from the SC Partnership for Economic Development, the Upper Delaware Council (UDC) and the National Park Service, and from NYSEG.

The presentations provided an overview of the model zoning law and ways towns can customize it (Carol Roig, SASD and Heather Jacksy, SC DPEM); an explanation of the process on interconnection of solar projects into the grid and causes of the current backlog of projects in the queue (Ray Kinney, NYSEG); information on solar projects being guided by the SC Partnership (Mark Baez); and information about the Section 487 Tax Exemption program which provides a 15 year exemption on increased property taxes on solar energy systems (Ed Homenick, SC Real Property Tax Services). Attendees asked excellent questions about all of these aspects of solar development.

We are working with Commissioner Eisenberg and DPEM staff to follow up on this presentation, make information accessible to all towns and the general public, and to offer assistance to individual towns as they craft their solar zoning laws.

We have initiated a discussion with the Division of Planning and the County Manager's office to explore ways we can collaborate to develop a coherent renewable energy plan for Sullivan County that is responsive to community concerns, identifies optimal and appropriate locations for large scale solar, and facilitates the robust build-out of solar and wind resources to meet the County's needs.

The backlog of large-scale projects awaiting approval for interconnection is delaying projects that are ready to go. Mr. Kinney explained that these large scale projects reserve space in the queue very early in the design stage. It is impossible to judge how many of the projects will actually move forward. Mr. Kinney also explained the various review regimes of NYISO, FERC, the PSC and NYSEG and the timeframe for large projects to gain approval. He explained that new regulations have been introduced recently that reduce the time a developer can sit in the queue without progressing in the application; these regulations are not retroactive to projects that filed earlier. He also discussed how NYSEG monitors energy production to ensure stability of the grid and the circumstances under which a solar array might be disconnected from the grid if it is not properly maintained or causes fluctuations in energy supply. And he shared a map that can be viewed on the NYSEG web site, which depicts substations, 3-phase wire, and strong and weak circuits in the grid.

**II. ENERGY MANAGEMENT FOR SC FACILITIES**

Work on the following priority projects is ongoing:

- NYPA project for HVAC replacement at SC Government Center
- Hybrid Vehicles for SC Fleet
- Solar Installation at the Liberty Health and Community Services Campus
- Adult Care Center Energy Efficiency Measures

### **III. SULLIVAN COUNTY COMMUNITY CHOICE AGGREGATION (CCA)**

SASD continues to research options for a county-wide CCA for Sullivan County.

### **IV. CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES**

The Town of Highland continues to work through their 6 month action plan to address immediate priorities.

The Town of Bethel is working on their solar zoning law.

### **V. Other Community Education and Outreach**

Catskill Mountainkeeper kicked-off their *Solarize Sullivan* project with an event on Thursday, July 28<sup>th</sup> at the Catskill Brewery in Livingston Manor. *Solarize Sullivan* is a bulk purchase program that seeks to reduce soft costs for residential and small business solar energy installations. Narrowsburg Union will host an outreach event on August 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM; and the Town of Highland will host an event in September.

SASD also provided consultations:

- A family owned farm in Hurleyville regarding solar energy projects and the possibility of creating a farmer “incubator” program.
- The Town of Mamkating regarding solar energy projects.

Carol Roig and Stephen Stuart

8-4-16