



Sullivan County Agriculture and Sustainability Policy Committee

July 9, 2015 AGENDA

1:30 PM

Committee Members:

Cindy Kurpil Gieger, Chair, Cora Edwards, Vice-Chair, Gene Benson, Alan Sorensen, Kitty Vetter

Call to Order

Attendance

Comments: Committee Chair

Reports:

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

Presentation: None

Discussion:

1. Energy Efficient Opportunities for Businesses
2. Agricultural Business Expansion and Retention Position

Resolutions: None

Public Comment

Adjourn

Farmland Protection Plan Update: The Ag Task Force has developed the Action Plan for Implementation of the plan. We are presenting next steps at the Ag and Sustainability Committee meeting.

Dairy Processing Project. CCE and planning on working on finalizing the terms of the leases and contracts between Catskill Mountain Dairies and the County. We are currently awaiting the CDBG contract from NYS for our \$100,000 grant.

Educational Programming:

We have working to develop agriculture programs for the summer. Upcoming programs include:

July 16 **Introduction to Poultry Farming** 5:30—8:00 pm

July 20 **Livestock Herd Health Management** 11:30 am — 2:00 pm

August 3 **High Tunnel Management** 3:00 pm—5:00 pm

Educational Brochures: With support from Sullivan Renaissance, County Planning and the SC Department of Public Health, CCE is working to develop educational brochures on Sullivan County Farmers' Markets and Sullivan County Vegetable/Fruit Producers. The Farmers Market brochure is planned to be printed around 4th of July and the Vegetable brochure in the middle of July.

Agriculture Districts: The Public Hearing was held for the Agriculture Districts. We have been providing technical assistance to landowners and inquiries.

Greenhouse/High Tunnel: CCE is working directly with BOCES to complete the construction of the High Tunnel. We anticipate doing our first workshop in August on High Tunnel Management

Agri-Business Revolving Loan Fund: CCE and Planning staff are in the process of reviewing potential applications for this loan program. Staff are doing extensive outreach on this program in order to attract new farmers. We are working with WDesign and Heron's Eye Communications to develop and outreach and informational brochure. Staff are in the process of interviewing loan recipients for this brochure. We anticipate launching the brochure in August.

In House Assistance: Assistance included information on:

- Assistance with Livestock production
- Loan and grant information, specifically info on the County Agri-Business Revolving Loan Fund
- Information on Agriculture Districts & Agriculture Assessments
- Assistance with Dairy Processing Requirements & equipment
- Assistance with general Beginner Farmer information
- Provided assistance with business planning information
- Assistance with identifying diseases/pests
- Animal Health
- Assistance with info on processing facilities
- Information on land use resources

OSE Activities Report for July 2015
Reporting on June 2015 activities

I. ENERGY MANAGEMENT FOR SC FACILITIES

All of these projects are pending:

- **NYPA Potential for HVAC replacement at SC Government Center**
- **Hybrid Vehicles for SC Fleet:** Proposed specifications are under review by DPW.
- **Solar PPA:** DPW is reviewing the stormwater management plan for the solar site.

II. COMMUNITY CHOICE AGGREGATION (CCA)

SASD has completed a draft proposal to the Public Service Commission (PSC) for a pilot Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) project in Sullivan County. We have received significant guidance from the PSC as well as Sustainable Westchester to shape our proposal. Key features of the proposal are:

- **Lower power costs for consumers:** the CCA will negotiate lower electricity rates for Sullivan County residential and commercial electricity customers;
- **Renewable energy:** the CCA will foster the development distributed energy resources (DER) – from renewable technologies, especially solar and wind, in keeping with the County’s Climate Smart Communities goals and the goals of the PSC’s REV;
- **Energy efficiency:** the CCA will incorporate energy efficiency and smart technology measures funded through monies set aside by the utilities for this purpose;
- **Grid resiliency:** the CCA aligns with the goals of our micro-grid projects in Liberty and Monticello, to maximize those resources to relieve pressures on the grid;
- **Economic development and job creation:** the local buildout and energy efficiency strategies will generate local jobs and economic activity.

Our proposal was submitted to the County for review on June 25th. We continue discussions with the County Manager’s office and the County Attorney’s office to clarify any issues for the County.

III. CLEANER GREENER COMMUNITIES PHASE II/ROUND THREE/CATEGORY 2 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

OSE has researched funding opportunities available through the Cleaner Greener Communities initiative. The deadline for applications for Category 2 is September 30, 2019, or sooner, if funds become exhausted. A 25% match is required, which can be dollars or in-kind. \$250,000 is the maximum for each application.

Eligible applicants must complete four of six action items promulgated by the program. One significant barrier is the inclusion in that list of actions a county is not empowered to take under home rule: for example, changes to the building code. OSE has reached out to NYSERDA and to Energy and Environment, the contractor hired by NYSERDA to field questions about Cleaner Greener Communities funding, to confirm that our contemplated projects are eligible for this funding opportunity and to determine what steps the County has taken that will qualify as required action items. We are working with NYSERDA to revisit the checklist to either add items that a county can accomplish or reduce the number of items a county must achieve.

The guidance on permitted projects indicates that the funding is intended to support projects designed to address the elements of the Climate Smart Communities pledge. In particular, two of the funding offerings align with Sullivan County goals identified in the Climate Action Plan and the Comprehensive Consolidated Transportation Plan, specifically:

Replace traditional vehicles with advanced vehicles (CSC ACTION 3.12): The following strategies are eligible for funding under this project type, and could be developed fairly quickly to support rapid replacement of aging county vehicles with hybrids:

- a) Develop vehicle replacement guidelines or policies to require the purchase of advanced vehicles and alternative fuel vehicles;
- b) Use established minimum fuel efficiency requirements for the types of vehicles in the fleet, as developed in(CSC ACTION 3.10) (if completed);
- c) Select advanced vehicles or alternative fuel vehicles for purchase that suit local needs, available fuels, and local vehicle availability;
- d) Consider a bulk purchase of vehicles to receive a better price, or organize a joint procurement with other neighboring jurisdictions, to maximize your buying power;
- e) Replace vehicles as they near the end of their useful life with advanced vehicles and alternative fuel vehicles and/or replace the least fuel efficient vehicles prior to their end of life.

Implement strategies that increase public transit ridership and alternative transport modes (CSC ACTION 6.12): This opportunity is timely to consider with the unveiling of the proposed transportation plan. Local governments can implement a variety of strategies to reduce some of the barriers to transit ridership such as cost of public transit, distance a passenger needs to travel to access transit, shelter at the transit stop, access to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and parking if the passenger is driving to a central spot to take transit into an urban area. After assessing the need, applicants can apply for funding to implement one of the following strategies:

- a) Develop shuttle system to trains;
- b) Improve walkways, sidewalks and/or bikeways to trains and buses;
- c) Create covered, secure bike racks;
- d) Ensure adequate car parking near bus stops;
- e) Encourage car sharing;
- f) Provide incentives directly to riders or work with local employers to provide incentives;
- g) to employees for using public transit;
- h) Coordinate with a regional transit agency or neighboring community to expand access to public transit within the region.

Required Action Items: In order to be eligible for Cleaner Greener Communities Category 2 funding, the proposer (in this case Sullivan County) needs to have completed 4 of the following 6 action items. The action items are:

1. Implement a Green Building Strategy
2. Adopt the New York State Unified Solar Permit
3. Support Alternative Fuel Transportation Supply Infrastructure
4. Adopt a Vehicle Fleet Efficiency Policy
5. Develop a Government Operations Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Inventory and Establish a Government Operations Emissions Reduction Target
6. Enable Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Financing (Only if within the jurisdiction of the proposing local government.)

Sullivan County has met the criteria for 1 and 5. For action #1, Green Building Strategy, the County has adopted Resolution 429-07, which requires all new county buildings to meet LEED certification standards or equivalent sustainable principles, practices and technologies. There is an additional requirement to create an electronic tracking system on all new construction to monitor this. For action #5, GHG inventory and reduction targets, Sullivan County has completed the GHG inventory and established GHG reduction goals in the Climate Action Plan.

RE Action 4 - **Adopt a vehicle fleet efficiency policy.** This is called for in the above mentioned resolution, but it has to be refined with specific goals and policy statements.

RE Action item #3 – **Support Alternative Fuel Transportation Supply Infrastructure.** This would support the development of a vehicle fleet efficiency policy, and there could be opportunities in the CGC program to help develop alternative fueled vehicle charging and filling stations within the county.

Thus, action Items 1, 3, 4 and 5 are either already accomplished or fairly easily completed and compatible with the County's goals. It appears that the County can apply for projects in Phase II, Round Three, Category 2.

OSE has also researched re-submission of the **Space and Energy Study.** The deadline is now a rolling deadline, through September 30, 2019 or until funds are exhausted. The requirement to have completed 4 out of the 6 Action Items applies to this application as well. We have received guidance from Energy & Environment that this project is eligible in this round.

IV. SC CLIMATE ACTION PLAN/CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES

The CSC Municipal Street lighting CSC Roundtable took place on May 19th at the Senior Center in Bethel. Representatives from Bethel, Highland, Lumberland and Forestburgh attended the meeting. Ana Hagerup of VHB Engineering, the CSC Mid-Hudson Regional Coordinators, led the discussion. Nancy Cozean, Eric Haefner and Nicholas Castro of Carmel Winwater Works, based in Poughkeepsie NY, presented the results of their analysis and of the Town of Bethel's current street lighting design and deployment, and their custom-designed strategy for the town to upgrade to LED by transitioning from Class 3 (Standard Street Lighting Service) to Class 4 (Street Lighting Service – Energy Only) with NYSEG. Two representatives from NYSEG were present for the presentation and discussion that followed.

Winwater's presentation covered key issues, including:

- Cost of the change-out, including buy-out costs from NYSEG;
- Cost savings associated with the use of LEDs, including lower energy costs and maintenance costs;
- Safety and aesthetic improvements associated with proper lighting design.

The next roundtable has been scheduled for August 27th. SASD has been invited to present an informational session at the Climate Smart Communities regional conference in September 2015.

V. NY PRIZE Micro-Grid Projects Liberty and Monticello

On July 7 2015, SASD, Booz Allen Hamilton and NYSERDA convened a Kick-off Meeting for all of the team members and stakeholders in the two micro-grid projects. CCE hosted the meeting, which included representatives from NYSERDA and NYSEG as well as Booz Allen Hamilton. Community stakeholders who attended included leaders of Village of Monticello, Village of Liberty, Town of Thompson, Town of Liberty, CCA, SC BOCES, Liberty ESD, SC IDA, the County Manager, and Legislator Kitty Vetter. In the next week, BAH will distribute a request for information (RFI) to all stakeholders to begin the collection of energy use data and an inventory of generating equipment (including emergency generators) and other information for the study. SASD will assist stakeholders in assembling the required information.

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