

SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

Meeting Minutes: January 6, 2022

Attending: Jason West (Energy Manager, non-voting), Gabriella Cebada Mora (Vice Chair, Water), Laura Gulfo (Office of Council), Andre Lake (Environmental Equity), ~~Pete Sheehan (Energy)~~, Bill Trudeau (Police Dept Traffic Engineering), Poulomi Sen (Planning Department), Scott Kellogg (Urban Agriculture), Harriet Lewis (Transportation), Joe Coffey (Water Department), Tina Lieberman (Chair, Zero Waste), Randy Milano (City Engineer), Daniel Kirk-Davidoff (Secretary, Outreach), Frank Zeoli (DGS), Violetta De Rosa, David Hochfelder.

Non-members: Dennis Gaffney

Absent: Jackie Gonzales (Environmental Equity, Outreach)

1. Regular business

- Tina Lieberman called the event to order at 6:01 pm.
- Welcome new SAC members Violetta De Rosa and David Hochfelder
- Motion to accept the December 12, 2021 minutes is *approved*.
- Public comment period (meeting was open to the public via the Mayor's Office of Energy & Sustainability Facebook page and the Sustainable Albany Facebook page and via emails to sac@albanyny.gov or Sustainability@albanyny.gov): No comments.

2. New business

- **Presentation: "Public power as a mechanism and vision for a green future,"**
 - (Zach Powell's presentation on choosing priority projects from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan has been postponed to the 2/3/22 SAC meeting.)
 - Rebecca Orrison member of Capital District Democratic Socialists of America and Public Power NY Coalition
 - Significant amount of utility debt in NYS
 - Concern of energy burden on households 6% of income spent on energy, for lower income households 8% spent on energy
 - Half of families that spend more than 10% on income on energy bills are black families
 - Moratoria on utility shutoffs due to COVID has ended
 - Learn from what happened in Texas with utility bills
 - Public power – focus on energy democracy and equity
 - Decarbonize grid, commodify grid, democratize political system
 - Local example – Green Island Power Authority founded 1921 – cheaper than NYS averages (37% cheaper than NYS, 48% cheaper than NYS average commercial rate)
 - Legislation introduced last year, reintroduced with some changes this year- NY Build Public Renewables Act (A1466a/S6453)
 - Scale up solar and wind
 - Expand NYPA generation capacity

- Service low-income communities at locked in process
- Revenue neutral using NYPA bonds
- Bands predatory middleman like ESCOS (lock in at low rate and then raise rates)
- Create union, green jobs – require project labor agreements and fair wage standards
 - a. Listed bill benefits
 - i. Costs less than investor-owned utilities
 - ii. Locked in rates
 - iii. Increase public engagement (where green energy is sited)
 - iv. Promote union workforce
 - v. Develop training and transition infrastructure (ex: MAP in South End of Albany apprenticeship program)
 - vi. Phase out fossil fuel infrastructure
- Climate and Community Project (CCP) Report
 - Highlights that NYS can be 75% renewable by 2030
- 60% of NYers want bill passed
- Statewide solutions can shift local landscape
- Change between bills
 - Updated labor language after discussions with unions
 - Clarified definition on clean energy
 - Bill more in alignment with CLCPA
- State Assembly had 51 cosigners; 18 in the Senate
 - Have asked Governor to include Bill in Executive budget and have seen more elected support
- NYPA – majority of energy is Hydro, what would the bill do for limits?
 - It removes the cap NYPA has and can have first offer on projects sought by state or NYSERDA
 - a. Seeing private investment but want to see state agencies (ex:NYPA) engaged in building utilities at a larger scale
- Questions / Comments
 - Not a new idea, others have done this around the turn of century and have seen lower rates
 - a. Rebecca – Nebraska is transitioning to being fossil fuel free
 - How working towards democratizing energy in low-income areas?
 - a. Looking at CEC campaign, energy efficiency work, community solar
 - Have there been any concerns raised regarding the bill?
 - a. Concerns raised that the proposed timeline of the bill may not be reasonable, too aggressive. Comment that aggressive timeline need to face challenges

- **Elections: Officers of Sustainability Advisory Committee (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary); Resolution to create Treasurer position**
 - 3 Officer positions with annual elections
 - Secretary
 - Previous Secretary Dan Kirk-Davidoff
 - Gabriella Cebada Mora nominated, accepted, motion to elect unanimously approved
 - Vice Chair
 - Previous chair Gabriella Cebada Mora
 - Tina Lieberman nominated, accepted, motion to elect unanimously approved
 - Chair
 - Previous chair – Tina Lieberman
 - Dan Kirk-Davidoff nominated, accepted, motion to elect unanimously approved
 - Resolution to create Treasurer position
 - 2021 was the first year the SAC was allotted a budget - \$2000
 - Proposal to pass resolution to create Treasurer and add powers and duties to by-laws (similar to other positions and duties)
 - Laura – recommend this meeting pass resolution for position, share summary of power and duties with committee and vote on that language to include in by laws next meeting
 - Tina – will share draft language and we will take vote at next meeting on positions duties
 - Motion made to create Treasurer position, passed unanimously

- **Co-Chair/Vice-Chair position for Subcommittees; Virtual Meeting Account Options**
 - 10 members of SAC
 - Members are Chair or Co-chair of subcommittee
 - These positions must be a voting member of SAC per counsel
 - A vice-chair could be appointed from subcommittee membership
 - Subcommittees do not have reliable access to virtual meeting platforms: Zoom account is \$150/yr, a free account allots only 40 mins; Google Meets is free but has no call-in option
 - Motion made to spend \$150 out of budget to purchase a Zoom account for SAC to be used for subcommittee meetings etc, approved

- **Albany's new sustainability-related positions: Director of Sustainability, Energy Manager and Climate Justice Fellow**
 - Jason is now Director of Sustainability
 - City is hiring an Energy Manager to backfill Jason's position
 - 2022 - Fulltime Climate Justice Fellow through NYSERDA
 - Looking for this to be an ongoing position
 - RADIX also has a climate justice fellow this year (begins this week)

- **Results of Interviews for SAC members (for 2 open Mayoral appointee positions)**
 - Two new members: David Hochfelder and Violeta De Rosa
 - David and Violeta introduced themselves and provided information on their backgrounds and areas of interest.

- **SUNY Interns – requests due; post for volunteers on [EngageUAlbany](#)**
 - One returning intern focused on social media work
 - 5-10 hours a week of work
 - Tina applied for intern to help at Tulip Fest and an additional intern to help at tent at multiple city events
 - Tulip Fest – submit schedule of events, letting us know how many tables we can set-up under tent

- **Update on Clean Energy Community Campaigns – 3 campaigns (*Energy Efficiency/Heat Pumps, Community Solar and Electric Vehicles*) approved by NYSERDA on 10-18-2.**
 - **Have 77 sign-ups** for community solar, meets 25 participant sign-up threshold for grant.
 - \$1500 grant, Jason will update us to confirm if we are receiving one of the remaining 4 grants.
 - Have new flier on Clean Energy Challenge
 - Tina sending to Dennis Gaffney and Mayor about promoting, also sending to neighborhood associations and CANA (Council of Neighborhood Assoc)
 - David H – share with Solarize Albany to distribute
 - Approval made by Jason West to print additional flyers using printing budget to provide to Solarize Albany to distribute
 - Planning a drive electric day after Earth Day
 - Request for application of support for Clean Energy Hub by Affordable Housing Partnership
 - AVillage, Radix, South End Improvement Corp all in support
 - Hub would have organizations from Albany, Troy Schenectady
 - **Motion** made to provide a letter of support, unanimously approved

- **Director of Sustainability, Commissioners and Subcommittee Chairs: Any updates or plans for 2022 to share?**
 - Joe Coffey (Albany Water Commissioner) –
 - received grant for constructed wetland for Hackett Blvd
 - two grants for 1.5M for reflections and morning garden at Lincoln Park
 - One page plan that outlines annual priorities and goals, hoping for endorsement by Albany Water Board in the next month and will share with SAC at next meeting
 - Harriet – Transportation

- Met in Dec., discussed which projects should be promoted for public transportation and how to change perception
 - Next meeting is Feb 28th
 - Dan
 - Outreach SC met and did year in review
 - Discussed how to make larger vision for clean energy
 - Continuing EV promotion and stats on purchase
 - Gaby
 - Focusing on Lead Pipe Initiative
 - Looking for interns for Water SC
 - Media/ Marketing
 - CEC and CSC water related goals
 - Anything else?
 - Dan –
 - Asking members to think big and take on active roles, how we can help reach climate goals, help achieve change
 - How are we meeting next month – zoom or in person
 - Laura – Jan 15th is expiration of officer’s public service law to meet virtually, will keep everyone up to date
 - Code says required to meet 6 times a year, by-laws say meet 12 times a year
 - If COVID levels are lower will meet in City Hall
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3. Adjournment: Event adjourned at 7:25pm. Next meeting is Thursday, February 3, 2022 at 6pm by Zoom unless notified otherwise.

Minutes prepared by Gabriella Cebada Mora January 6, 2022