

TOMPKINS COUNTY ENERGY TASK FORCE
Friday, Jan. 18, 2019
Human Services Building, 320 W. State/MLK Jr, Ithaca, NY 14850
Final Minutes

Attendance

Member		Member		Staff	
Sharon Anderson	P	Bob Howarth	P	Darby Kiley	P
Martha Armstrong	P	Tim Mount	P	Kristin McCarthy	P
Cliff Babson	A	Martha Robertson	A		
Fernando de Aragón	P	Brice Smith	A		
Brian Eden	P	Jennifer Tavares	E		
Todd Fox	E	Irene Weiser	P		
Nick Goldsmith	P	Gordon Woodcock	A		
Curt Gooch	A	Sarah Zemanick	E		

Guests – Terry Carroll, Karim Beers, Joe Wilson, Sara Hess, Aislyn Colgan, Jerry Goodenough

Welcome– Chair Sharon Anderson called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Comments from the Public: Round 1 – Karim Beers suggested a community-wide Energy Forum be organized, akin to the Housing Forum the County sponsored a couple of years ago. Joe Wilson seconded Karim’s suggestion. He also shared that the Town of Dryden is revising its comprehensive plan, which was last updated in 2004.

Agenda Review/Changes – None

Approval of December 6, 2018 minutes

Action: Martha Armstrong moved approval of the Dec. 6, 2018, minutes. Bob Howarth seconded. Motion carried.

Carbon Pricing Proposal Update – William Schulze, Cornell University

Bill Schulze, of the Dyson School, spoke to the group about the proposal by the New York Independent System Operator (NYISO) to require carbon pricing for all power sold in New York State through the NYISO wholesale electricity market. NYISO would debit local wholesale price from utilities for wholesale energy purchases and would account for the carbon adder on marginal units. The NYISO would credit the carbon charge residuals, which are the sum of the carbon charges debited from suppliers, to the utilities. Methane is not included, but the carbon charge will reduce demand for natural gas by generators. Given that consumers will not feel price increases from the carbon charge, the program does not directly give incentives for consumers to conserve energy. The carbon charge does not incorporate damages to human health. Note, reductions in health damages from fine particulates would have more than paid for the emissions reductions proposed in the Clean Power Plan. Bob mentioned that the NYS Assembly passed a bill that includes methane in greenhouse gas emissions accounting. If County wants to apply pressure on New York State to pass the proposal, in Bill’s opinion the Public Service Commission would be the best leverage point. Sarah Zemanick brought up topic of possible unintended consequences on carbon pricing if it is just placed on electricity – for example, how might it affect the transition to heat pumps? A copy of Bill’s presentation is posted to the ETF webpage.

Election of Officers

Action: Darby Kiley presented the slate of officers for 2019: Sharon Anderson was nominated for chair and Sarah Zemanick for vice chair. Bob Howarth moved the slate and Fernando de Aragón seconded. There were no additional nominations from the floor. Motion carried.

Policy Committee

Committee continues to clarify its mandate, in particular whether it should weigh in on broader regional and state level policy questions, or focus on proceedings and policies specific to Tompkins County. Brian Eden thought committee could agree on broad set of principles to guide responses crafted by the ETF to specific issues. Martha Robertson is on the Climate Change Committee of the NYS Association of Counties and could bring ETF feedback to that group. Fernando suggested giving County Legislature language to support initiatives at the state level, for example carbon pricing. Martha Armstrong thinks they should focus on County-level and work to interpret expertise gleaned from ETF members to area businesses and decision makers.

Energy Strategy Update – Darby Kiley

Darby shared the latest developments with the Energy Strategy and asked for feedback. The process will be broken into five stages, or tasks, but at this meeting she particularly sought the members' opinions on the first task – Conducting topical focus groups to develop a Big List of Actions. The Planning and Sustainability Department hopes to get focus groups up and running in the next month. Here are some of the highlights from the discussion:

- In December 2018, a scope of services agreement was signed with consulting firm Cadmus Group. [A bit later in meeting, Irene Weiser expressed her concern that ETF members hadn't been included in the selection process.]
- Cut transportation, as it's covered extensively in other studies (Fernando)
- Add energy storage – it's a cross-cutting issue; wind has more potential than solar (Tim Mount)
- Factor in questions of equity; perhaps pair storage with another topic; clump electrification with building efficiency (Nick Goldsmith)
- Focus on low- to moderate-income and rural communities; identify locations where solar would work but needs infrastructure (Irene)
- Remove wind, micro-hydro, and biomass (multiple)
- Add carbon sequestration (Joe Wilson)
- Include negative emissions (Sara Hess)

Member Announcements – Email announcements to Kristin McCarthy by January 23.

Comments from the Public: Round 2 – Aislyn Colgan, energy educator with Cooperative Extension, asked ETF members to contact her with ideas for sustainable or energy efficient initiatives (low-hanging fruit) that she could bring to NYSEG as part of her work with the utility on the Energy Smart Community program. Karim announced that Get Your Green Back Tompkins is recruiting for energy navigators.

Adjournment – Chair Sharon Anderson adjourned the meeting at 10:42 am.