

TOMPKINS COUNTY ENERGY TASK FORCE
Friday, Feb. 15, 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	P		
Fernando de Aragón	P	Brice Smith	P		
Brian Eden	P	Jennifer Tavares	P		
Todd Fox	P	Irene Weiser	P		
Nick Goldsmith	P	Gordon Woodcock	P		
Curt Gooch	A	Sarah Zemanick	P		

Guests – Joe Wilson, Sara Hess, Miranda Phillips (Citizens Climate Lobby), Aislyn Cogan

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

Comments from the Public: Round 1 – Joe Wilson commented on the new SEQR guidelines from DEC on energy efficiency in relation to environmental impact statements.

Agenda Review/Changes – None

Approval of Jan. 18, 2019 minutes – **Action:** Martha Armstrong moved approval of the January meeting minutes. Bob Howarth seconded. Motion carried.

Update on Co. Leg resolution on Carbon Dividend Act – Martha Robertson and Miranda Phillips

Chair of the Legislature Martha Robertson and community organizer Miranda Phillips from Citizens’ Climate Lobby spoke to the group about the bipartisan Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act. The bill is making its way through the U.S. Congress, with hopes that it will be passed in 2020. The carbon fee, which starts low and increases by \$10 per year, is designed to get businesses to green their operations. Dividends collected from the carbon fee will be distributed equally to the American people in form of monthly checks, and any administrative costs are paid from the fees collected. Complementary legislation has been proposed in states like Kentucky where it’s harder to transition away from carbon-based energy sources.

Several ETF members support the bill as a great way to get buy-in from the public, limit government bureaucracy, and pass cost directly to the fossil fuel companies. Others were concerned that it undermines the regulatory power of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Miranda countered that latest IPCC report argues for a carbon fee and economists across the political spectrum agree. If this approach doesn’t work within the next 10 years, federal regulations will be reinstated. She emphasized that U.S. representative Tom Reed needs to hear from business (in particular in agriculture and manufacturing) and municipal leaders in his district who support the Carbon Dividend Act.

Energy Strategy Update – Darby Kiley

Darby recapped the purpose of Energy Strategy and relayed she incorporated ETF member feedback on focus groups since the January meeting. In their current form, focus groups cover the following topics: solar energy; building energy (efficiency and electrification in new and existing buildings); transportation (efforts here will be made in tandem with ITCTC’s long-range transportation plan); cross-cutting policy topics; distributed energy storage, and carbon farming and sequestration. Individual meetings will be held on wind, micro-hydro, and biomass. Actions should include the following characteristics:

- Feature County as project leader or member of strong partnership
- Can be implemented within next two years – some flexibility as to what that means; for instance “implemented” could include applying for funding
- Will reduce GHG emissions measurably by 2050 (ideally sooner than that)
- Be financially and technically feasible; have access to funding and other resources
- Benefit LMI populations and address questions of equity
- Not negatively impact economy

Darby has worked with Cadmus consultants to review existing County energy plans, specifically evaluating what has yet to be initiated and what might need additional resources. Plan is to divide possible actions into three piles – no go, maybe, yes – and then provide focus group members with a viable list in advance of meetings for their assessment. To that end, ETF members shared the following feedback:

- In New York State, most GHG emissions come from heating and transportation. Place emphasis there versus electrification.
- Invest more in wind energy to support electricity; solar is not sufficient in winter.
- Consider short- and long-term impact on local economy when choosing recommended actions.
- Think about localized generation since state infrastructure for electricity is lacking (nuclear power plants, for example, are in poor shape).
- Include carbon sequestration in County methodology for GHG emissions accounting, and strive for stronger GHG emissions goals in line with latest United Nations IPCC report.
- Link land use with transportation. [Land use likely to be embedded in multiple areas of the plan.]
- Help municipalities implement the many policies already in place.
- Include HVAC technicians, plumbers, and other front-line professionals in focus groups. [Other approach would be to include in outreach sessions.]

Policy Committee – Committee did not meet. No report.

Member Announcements

- Brian has approached engineers involved with construction of new NYSDOT facility by airport about considering geothermal power or heat pumps as an energy source instead of propane.
- Purity Ice Cream was honored with the first HeatSmart Award for Outstanding Earth Stewardship.
- The Environmental Management Council is hosting its spring public outreach event March 12th.

- The Green New Deal specifically endorses a 2013 report published by Bob, Tony Ingraffea, and others on how to make New York State’s energy infrastructure carbon-free by 2030.
- Irene met with the director of NYSERDA and other high-level staff as part of the Renewable Heat Now team to encourage development of heat pumps.
- Nick is participating in Civic Ensemble’s community-based play on climate change.

Comments from the Public: Round 2 – Sara Hess shared that the “Climate Wise Gardening: An Earthkeeping Fair” will be held April 27th at Boynton Middle School. She also mentioned that a carbon farming bill has been introduced in the NYS Legislature. Joe Wilson passed around a letter from the City of Ithaca Planning and Development Board expressing its frustration at how to implement existing local energy efficiency policies. The Town of Ithaca Planning Board has expressed similar concerns. Darby added that a local planners group is being re-formed and she will bring this topic up for discussion.

Adjournment – Chair Sharon Anderson adjourned the meeting at 10:33 am.