

Nyack Sustainability Committee Meeting Notes

November 6, 2019

In attendance: Marcy Denker, Steve Cea, Kyle Sitzman, Minerva Parker, Dana Harkreider, Joel Newtown, Michelle Morales, Rosemary Farrell, Liz McGrory

1. NYACK 2030

a. Workshop

Marcy outlined plans and invited input for the Nyack 2030 workshop scheduled for Wednesday November 13.

- Responses from approximately 40 people of the 80 invited from community organizations in Nyack, S Nyack and Upper Nyack. Few responses from temples and churches so further outreach may be needed.
- Marcy will start by describing initiative and then 10-12 participants will talk briefly about what they are doing to help flesh out initiative, followed by Q and A and comments. We need to identify a way to access the organization and a contact person.
- The overarching idea is to launch the Nyack 2030 initiative during the winter of 2020 and for others to adopt the “brand” and continue or expand their work within this umbrella.
- We will find out in December if Nyack is awarded a grant for the climate action plan, and if so outreach can be done more professionally through designing a website, for example. If the grant is not awarded we will still reach out to and work with community groups but with fewer resources.
- People and organizations expected to attend the meeting and participate in the initiative include: Mayors of Nyack, UN and SN; members of green committees from the three villages; Sonia Cairo from KRB; Cris Speziale from RCC Culinary Institute; Angela Strong and others from Nyack Public Library; JC Brotherhood from the waterfront committee; NPS; and Laurie Seeman from Strawtown Studios. Others invited include Diana Cutt and Nyack Center.
- Marcy will describe the climate smart community effort and note that we are looking toward a climate action plan. Success would be if people are enthusiastic about the effort and if we can identify a point person in each organization who will work with us toward launching the plan in early 2020. This effort will encompass ongoing and possibly expanded work of these organizations.
- Climate smart communities is a NYS program that certifies communities that work on mitigating their effects on the climate. The climate action plan is a policy that Nyack could adopt that is community wide and would include -- but is not limited to -- greenhouse gas related efforts.
- The committee needs to compile a list of efforts underway in town and then put forward a proposal on which to follow up. For the meeting we will develop a sheet with two sections for people to complete: what are they doing, and what they could do.

b. Community Updates

- i. Upper Nyack: leaf blowers and trees
 1. “Love em and leave ‘em” education effort for leaves has been adopted in UN along with Nyack and Piermont. This is becoming

mainstream, and adopted by large facilities such as Sarah Lawrence College. Ani Adishian is a resource.

2. Upper Nyack has a tree committee, and S Nyack is also starting one.
3. Tree planting is ongoing and going very well in Nyack.

c. Monthly email

- i. Nyack 2030 needs a monthly email newsletter, and someone will need to write and distribute it.

2. SCHOOLS/YOUTH

a. Plastics and schools: Update (Joel)

- i. Plastic bag ban will need a way to incentivize people to bring reusable bags, or to get paper bags. The State ban starts in March; Rockland county and then NY state passed a law banning plastic bags. The NY State law bans plastic bags but allows paper to be given away with no fee. Municipalities are allowed to adopt a local law but required to do so within the context of the state law. Under the state system merchants collect fees which are then sent to the state, with some coming back to the municipality.
- ii. We could look to develop BYOB materials at farmers market and table tents to distribute to merchants and possibly work with students to develop art, posters, etc.
- iii. Glen is looking at plastic and styrofoam; a lot is going on at the county and state levels including both bans and “bans of bans” (plastic bags, straws, styrofoam). He is looking for models including a timetable for Nyack to step up and do this, including identifying what is getting traction and where it is happening. Initiatives often start in schools so he is also looking for information on how to approach schools.
- iv. Piermont has a ban on styrofoam. This could be “low hanging fruit” with which to start.
- v. Efforts need to balance between “low hanging fruit” and discrete actions with larger initiatives that may have more impact.

b. Rockland Conservation and Service Corps

- i. Cathy Gallione: RCSC offers opportunities for volunteer work, cleanups, as well as more focused internship-type activities.

3. ENERGY

a. Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) update

- i. Two meetings are coming up to present and describe CCA to the community. CCA involves bulk purchasing/procurement on behalf of any small business or entity. A local law was passed to pursue CCA, and Joule Community Power has been contracted to administer the program. UN, SN, Orangetown, Clarkstown, and Nyack are all on board with the same administrator. (This is also done in Westchester).
- ii. VON will need to put its “seal of approval” on any communication so it is clear that CCA is not a company with something to sell. Consumers don’t have to participate in CCA, but they are automatically signed up unless

they opt out. CCA allows the Village and consumers to get a lower price on green energy (hydro, solar, wind) for electricity, replacing O&R. Joule will issue an RFP.

1. Meetings and other actions are needed to provide information for the public to avoid confusion and concern. Joule will create FAQs that will also send people to a website for more information.
 - a. Hudson Valley community power website has relevant information on CCA.

b. Home Energy Efficiency: Workshop recap and next steps

Around 20 people attended the workshop which is a good start, although much more work and outreach is needed in this area. Donna Lightfoot Cooper will spearhead outreach in Nyack Plaza; it would be helpful to find 5 or so people to try out the home energy audit to determine and demonstrate whether it is beneficial in this environment.

c. LED update

- i. Streetlights will soon be replaced with LED fixtures.

d. Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Update

- i. Steve will undertake greenhouse gas inventories. **Clear Path** is a system used to gather greenhouse gas emissions data for municipalities and communities. Its US community protocol will be used to structure the protocol, including a minimum of five emissions generating activities: electricity use, stationary fuel use (heating), on-road passenger and freight, wastewater treatment, solid waste.
- ii. Steve has read over the description and is gathering a document list and other questions to determine whether Nyack has the information and to identify next steps. NYSERDA has collected data for O&R for the community. Information can be grouped within the zip code (residential, commercial, industrial), but some information is missing, and some is withheld. He is reaching out to others that have undertaken this project, including Haverstraw, and is targeting the 2018 calendar year.
- iii. This is one component of the climate action plan, and the assessment can inform how to target our actions to address it.

4. COMMUNICATION

a. Articles in Nyack News and Views:

- i. Thanks to Ellie, Kathy and Kyle
- ii. Call for more writing and research for Earth Matters (and other tasks)
 1. Kyle: Hudson Link.
 2. Kathy Schwartz: mass transit.
 3. Want to hear from people who can contribute to this.

5. NATURAL RESOURCES

a. Pollinator Pathway Update (Dana)

- i. Volunteer turnout was good for the first planting day in September; five beds were planted.
- ii. They are looking at next steps such as getting more homeowners involved in the pathway. People want to garden ecologically but don't

know how to do so, so the group will look at how to present information on simple steps, including which plants to plant, how to maintain trees on property, etc.

iii. School outreach: have done curriculum development, and are also working with Deb Stone who does the butterfly garden at Memorial Park.

iv. They may use volunteers from Rockland conservation and service corps.

b. Nyack Waterfront Committee (JC Brotherhood) on Resiliency and DEC Guidebook (did not discuss)

c. Parks Conservancy and funding: Funding designated to the tree committee was transferred to the Village and trees purchased for planting.

6. MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

a. BYOBag and Fee for Bags (see above)

b. Ashcrete: (did not address due to time)