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**TOWN OF RED HOOK**  
**CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of meeting

August 10, 2011

Members present: Chairwoman Brenda Cagle; Sarah Imboden; Laurie Husted, Susan Ellis; Zoie Riel (7:17 P.M.); Dr. Jane Ferguson (7:17 P.M.); Denis Collet (8:07 P.M.) Absent: Karen Schneller MacDonald, Anne Rubin

Guest: Energy Manager Anne Marie Hirschberger

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairwoman Brenda Cagle called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

**MINUTES OF THE JULY 13, 2011 MEETING:** The minutes of the July 13 meeting were approved with a motion made by Jane Ferguson and seconded by Sarah Imboden. Laurie Husted noted that she could not vote to approve the minutes, as she did not attend that meeting.

**DRAFT CLIMATE ACTION PLAN OUTLINE:** Energy Manager Anne Marie Hirschberger attended the meeting for presentation and discussion of a draft Climate Action Plan. Anne Marie said that most Climate Action Plans start with the history of the development of the Plan; she did not feel a need for help with that. What she really is concerned with and wants input on is the Community Measures section of the Plan. These are programs, opportunities, and activities that the people of Red Hook could do to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Anne Marie asked if the Council would go over the outline item by item, or section by section to see if what is in the outline makes sense, or if the CAC thinks that there are items missing.

*IV., a., i. 10 %Challenge:* Anne Marie proposed starting with Section IV, Residential Measures, then moving to the Commercial/Industrial sector, Transportation, and so on. She began with participation in the 10% Challenge, noting that she and Brenda Cagle have spoken with Melissa Everett of Sustainable Hudson Valley. Melissa suggests that the 10% Challenge should not be ending. She would support it being incorporated into the Climate Action Plan as the Town's emission targets, and be upgraded to a 15% by 2020 Challenge. Anne Marie noted that they still wanted everyone to be mindful that the 10% Challenge was the foundation of the Climate Action Plan.

*IV, a., ii., iii., iv. Compact fluorescent bulbs, Community gardens, Energy efficiency:* Anne Marie continued with the next items under the Residential sector - switching to compact fluorescent light bulbs, promoting community gardens and additional energy efficiency measures. CAC members noted that the Town does not have natural gas furnaces or boilers. Susan Ellis said that there would be propane heaters and boilers and asked if they would qualify. Brenda Cagle suggested that the CAC could ask if Central Hudson would add them to their rebate programs. CAC members also discussed whether or not propane is more energy efficient, with a suggestion that if the propane burner is a new, energy efficient system, it could rate in the high 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, whereas oil burners rate in the high 80<sup>th</sup> percentile. Anne Marie noted that there is no clear choice of propane over oil, and CAC members decided with Anne Marie to add to the energy efficiency section that whatever heat source a resident chooses, he/she should make sure that it is as efficient as possible. Laurie Husted added that it would be interesting to find out the comparison of the efficiency of propane versus oil heaters, noting that for

Bard College, consultants for a project gave a relative efficiency, the CO2 emissions and cost of proposed systems, and let the College make its choice.

Sarah Imboden asked about including composting in the Residential sector. She noted that it is included under the Commercial/Industrial sector, but felt that it should have a separate inclusion under Residential. Perhaps the CAC should do a seminar about using compost bins for those who purchased or won a bin, or promote another compost bin sale. Anne Marie agreed.

Anne Marie Hirschberger reported that she spoke with Sustainable Hudson Valley Director Melissa Everett, who gave many good ideas for ways to promote Climate Action Plan items. She told Anne Marie that only 7 people had signed out “Kill-a-Watt” meters from the library. Laurie Husted noted that there are two libraries in Red Hook, and meters are available in other libraries throughout the area. Anne Marie thinks that “Kill-a-Watt” is a good tool, and would like to promote the program. She thought that it would be good to have a “how to” segment about the program on PANDA.

Sarah Imboden asked for more ideas for organization of Residential and Commercial/Industrial actions. Laurie said that is a difficult task, because there should be comparisons. Anne Marie noted that she has a Climate Action Plan for the Town of Bedford, which is considered the “gold standard” in the area. Bedford’s Plan is divided into sections for energy, recycling, water, etc., but she and people that she works with felt that it is important to have a section that answers what residents can do. Zoie Riel said she agrees with how Bedford arranged its Plan, as she would want to know how to deal with a specific subject and not have them segregated. She feels that the policies should be the same across the board. The CAC further discussed organization ideas, and Zoie added that if a focus was put on residential actions in one area, residents may assume that they don’t have to care what businesses or governments or schools do. Anne Marie said that she could e-mail the link to the Town of Bedford Climate Action Plan.

Brenda Cagle asked Anne Marie if she has checked out the incentives at the Climate Change office, which are online. Anne Marie replied that she did pull them up and has one of her interns going through them. She added that what she did see gave some good ideas.

*IV., a.,v.* Moving to the section on Renewable Energy, Anne Marie noted that there definitely is interest in solar panels, and there could be discussion about incentives. She added that solar thermal (heating water) is more efficient than solar electric.

*IV., a., vi. Renewable Energy:* The CAC discussed a follow-up to Myenergyplan.net. Sarah Imboden suggested that it would have been good if at the end of the Myenergyplan.net website, they had some chart or other memo for people who signed up to print and keep on the refrigerator for a reminder and to check off items acted upon. Sarah added that there should be some follow-up for the energy plans to chart how they are progressing.

Anne Marie noted that the Public Service Commission was ordered to keep a website that will be a clearing house for information on all the different energy programs available in New York State, beginning in September. The site will have a similar feature to Myenergyplan.net. Sarah also added that when a participant first fills out their energy plan and finds that he/she already can check off some actions, it is easy to feel that the project is done; there needs to be a coaching to re-energize the effort. Laurie said that it has been interesting monitoring the 10% Challenge e-mails. When there was notice about the composting program, and encouraging purchase of compost bins, there were peripheral e-mails with questions from people who already

had composting bins. She added that this shows that people want advice from experts, so the 10% Challenge Committee had hoped to identify people who would act as experts for advice on various energy resource issues.

*IV., a., vii. HERS rating for home sales:* Anne Marie discussed the idea of requiring a Home Energy Rating System (HERS) inspection as part of a real estate package for sale of a property. It would encourage homeowners to invest in energy conserving features, as they would add value to the sale. She noted that there is some resistance to this.

*IV., a. viii Building Codes:* Anne Marie continued with a section for the Building Code, where she suggested encouraging use of low volatile organic compound (VOC) paint and contractor education for the Energy Star ordinance requirements.

*IV.,b. Community Measures, Commercial/Industrial:* For the Commercial recommendations, Susan Ellis suggested that Anne Marie needs to make a distinction reflecting the fact that many of the small businesses don't own the building that they are operating in. Therefore, they need their own recommendations for what they can do for energy conservation, because short of asking the landlord to pay for improvements, they generally do not have the money to invest. Another help would be giving good and clear information about what timing and set-backs promote the most efficient use of energy use, as there is often a difference of opinion.

Jane Ferguson suggested that under the Commercial/Industrial sector, Anne Marie should add trees and low maintenance landscaping.

*IV., c. Transportation:* For the Transportation sector, Brenda Cagle described "pop-up" bike lanes as a designation on local roads using a washable paint to define bike lanes for special events. The energy committee discussed having them on days other than Hardscrabble Day, which has too much traffic and too many events happening.

*At this point, Denis Collet joined the meeting.*

Other transportation issues discussed were carpooling/ridesharing, whether or not an electric car battery charging station would be of interest and where to put one, anti-idling regulations and having local bus service with coordination to the Bard College shuttle. Brenda Cagle noted that the County currently is conducting a "Moving Dutchess" survey to get transportation information.

*IV., d. Waste:* CAC members discussed promoting "pay as you throw" garbage options. In the Villages, it is the main choice for customers, who have recycling free in addition. The Town offers the service at the Recycling Center and many residents might find it cheaper to buy a sticker for the Recycling Center and pay the per bag fee. Sarah Imboden noted that there was some problem finding locations to place the flyer that she did for the CAC – "Are you paying too much for your trash?" Sarah has also put out information through Red Hook Moms. She added that she feels that the desire for convenience drives the use of private haulers, even though it may not be as economical. Susan Ellis suggested that if the CAC wants to promote the "pay as you throw" system, it needs to consider offering another pick-up day at the Recycling Center.

*V., a., iii. Municipal Measures:* Laurie Husted reported that Red Hook School District Superintendent Paul Finch has asked if there are any grants for more energy efficient buses.

*V., b., iii. Buildings and facilities:* Denis Collet noted that the inclusion of "promote use of low volatile organic compound (VOC) paint" is probably unnecessary, as they are being taken off the market.

Summary: Energy Manager Anne Marie Hirschberger concluded the description of the draft Climate Action Plan Outline and asked if there were any other ideas to be included. Denis Collet asked what it means to say that we have a Climate Action Plan in the context of renewables, if we have any level of detail and how we tie that into community action or a Town sponsored service. Anne Marie answered that most Towns lay out all the possible options and then the Town chooses what it is comfortable doing. How these actions would be promoted will have to be addressed with implementation. Brenda Cagle asked if that process would be included as one of the topics in the Plan, and would there be monitoring. Anne Marie replied that monitoring would be important. Brenda asked how she would define who would be responsible for moving a project along. Anne Marie said that issue should be discussed. Brenda asked if there should be a section in the Plan for who should be in charge after Anne Marie finishes her term April 1, 2012. Anne Marie said that we will have to identify people who will keep this going. Zoie Riel said that it really needs to become policy. Anne Marie suggested that it should be incorporated in the planning process. She was asked if the Town of Bedford plan did that; Anne Marie thought so. She said that she would follow up with the link to Bedford's Climate Action Plan.

Denis Collet asked what the CAC's scale of involvement would be in the Climate Action Plan; how does a Town of our size take a piece of this information and turn it into achievable goals. He felt that so many options may not help; the CAC needs to weed out those considerations that don't make sense for Red Hook. Anne Marie agreed that is true, and that the CAC needs to set priorities – short term, medium term and long term goals. Sarah Imboden suggested that the Climate Action Plan might make more sense if it were reorganized by topic, such as water use, energy and waste, etc., which would reduce the redundance. She added that making it more than three pages would make it seem overwhelming. She asked Denis if what he was really asking is "Who is this Plan for?" Denis replied that there are multiple dimensions to the Plan. There is a value to seeing on a few pages all of the domains relating to energy conservation; there is another level of appreciation that is what are the relative merits of some of the energy resource technologies. There is debate about the environmental benefits of natural gas furnaces and biodiesel. He suggested that the CAC is chartered with being able to evaluate the merits of these, as well as the ability to deliver them, which may mean that the CAC should do more research or defer to other experts. He is offering the questions. Zoie Riel said that what he is asking is what outcome do we expect. Laurie Husted said that part of the process is putting it on paper and that going to stakeholders in the community will draw out the answers. Zoie asked about the resources that the Town has, such as apple waste; Anne Marie suggested a waste audit.

Energy Manager Anne Marie Hirschberger said that the CAC and energy group need to be mindful that the proposed time line is to complete the Draft Climate Action Plan by the end of August and go to stakeholders in September. The CAC thanked Anne Marie for her work on, and presentation of the Plan, as well as working with the Energy Savings Plan with Central Hudson. Brenda Cagle noted that 100 people have signed up for the Energy Savings Plan.

**ELECTRONIC WASTE COLLECTION FOR HARDCRABBLE DAY:** Zoie Riel reported that the e-waste collection will be on Hardscrabble Day, September 24, 2001 from 9A.M. – 1P.M. at the Holy Cow parking lot. Zoie has done a flyer and noted that it will not be necessary to be a resident of Red Hook to bring electronic waste. Brenda Cagle added that Kim Gomez of the Red Hook Chamber of Commerce will publicize events in the Chamber newsletter. Sarah Imboden offered to e-mail Red Hook Moms. Brenda Cagle announced it at the Town Board meeting Committee report on August 9. Town Clerk Sue McCann said that the Town gets inquiries about e-waste collection and asked what the charge would be. Zoie replied that the Town will not be charged, but she doesn't know yet about a charge per car. Businesses will have to go separately.

**RECYCLING:** Zoie Riel reported that she is still working to complete the new Recycling Brochure. CAC members discussed recycling plastic bags. Zoie Riel said that many small malls with a single manager have a combined square footage that requires a collection point for plastic bags. Laurie Husted will ask Hannaford about putting up a sign of the plastic bag products that can be recycled over the bin for the bags.

**PLANNING BOARD MINUTES REVIEW:** Susan Ellis reported on the Planning Board minutes for July 18, 2011, and agenda for August 1, 2011. She noted that a lot of the business was small lot minor subdivisions and apartment conversion requests. There was also a public hearing for an amended site plan for Car Quest to add a storage building, with no signage or lighting change; there was no public comment.

There were two applications of relevance to the CAC. Bard College is proposing a 16,500 square foot addition to the Avery Blum building. Bard expects to add 24 new geothermal wells, do new landscaping and possibly include rain gardens. There was a question about archeological studies, but that has been answered by work done previously by archeologist Chris Lindner. The College expects to submit a stormwater pollution prevention plan. The College is also planning to convert the former Cappuccino's Restaurant into Two Boots Pizza and offices.

The other application of interest is the request by David Sampler of Aspinwall Road for a special permit to construct a garage/studio within the Flood Fringe Overlay District. Susan Ellis noted that these are the types of considerations that the CAC may wish to comment on. Many lots in the subdivision were developed that should not have been approved, and then there are requests for additional approval. Sarah Imboden will do the review of the Planning Board minutes for the September meeting.

**HARDSCRABBLE DAY/INTERNATIONAL MOVING PLANET DAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2011:**

Laurie Husted reported that there will be a "Pedal On" program to encourage people to bicycle. The 10 % Challenge Committee is planning a bike decorating contest and hoping that parents will also bike. The CAC discussed transportation assistance for Hardscrabble Day attendees. Senior Services is trying to get a private service for seniors. Sarah Imboden said that she would request a trolley from the County.

The 10 % Challenge Committee proposes to use a bike design on a "t" shirt to promote biking. Brenda Cagle said that Dan Baxter has a design. Brenda reported that she has a banner estimate from Dutchess Signs - \$100 for a 6'x2' and \$60 for a 4'x2'. The CAC chose the 4'x2', which will take 1 week to make.

**CONSERVATION EASEMENT TAX ABATEMENT PROGRAM:** There was discussion of the program at the Tuesday Town Board meeting. Brenda Cagle noted that of the 13 residents that applied for the program, only 3 followed through. Larry Thetford said that if he had known that the reduction of taxes was so little, he would have done a shorter term. Councilmen Harry Colgan and Jim Ross will review the program and ask Larry to join them. In the original law, a term of 8 years qualified for a 40% reduction in assessment and a term of 15 years qualified for a 75% reduction. However, the numbers were not binding on the assessor, so they didn't work out.

**RECYCLING CENTER REORGANIZATION AND HIGHWAY GARAGE PLACEMENT:** Supervisor Sue Crane notified Brenda Cagle that when discussing the reorganization for the Recycling Center space and the collaborative use of the Highway Garage Campus with the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), she suggested that the Town erect a kiosk with display space for a tribute to the DEC for its support of the Recycling Center. She suggested a weather protected display board installed in the green island between the new garage and the roadway. She thought that it could be a prime location for residents to gather "green" information and for that CAC to display educational materials for all who use the Recycling Center. CAC

members discussed the concept and all agreed that it is a good idea. The CAC will work on suggestions for size, design and what would be practical.

**PHOTOVOLTAIC DISPLAY:** Denis Collet will research what is available to have for a public display of the energy produced by the new photovoltaic installations. He said that the other option would be to have a dedicated display.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 P.M.

**NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday, September 14, 2011 at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary