

MINUTES: ECC Meeting, December 2016

In attendance: Tom Konrad, Doug Adams, Margot Becker, Iris Bloom, Eric Stewart. Guests: John Wackman, Solarize Hudson Valley (presenter); Abdiel Lopez-Torres, Scenic Hudson; Amy Moses

Street Light Update

Tom reported that 23 lights have been removed; 2 added. This brings us to 60 street lights in Marbletown. Central Hudson says that they will have new more yellow 3000K LEDs sometime in January. Tom is delaying reporting some dim streetlights until then in the hope that they will be replaced with the new LEDs rather than the bluer 5400K LEDs they have been using so far.

Iris brought up lights at Municipal Complex— “they are on all night & very bright.” Doug responded that this is due to grant funding and complex’s former role as a school. Doug was to check if these were on timer and if lights could be dimmed. Iris questioned need for all current lights to remain in operation.

Solarize Ulster Presentation, John Wackman

Solarize Hudson Valley is a public education and group purchasing program funded by NYSEDA, the state energy authority. This program would allow individual homeowners and business & non-profit building owners to receive the trustworthy information they need to decide whether solar makes sense for them. A group purchase discount (minimum of 10%) on purchasing/installing solar energy systems. These savings would be in addition to the existing NYSEDA incentive of 40 cents per watt (\$2,800 for an avg 7kw system) plus the 25% NYS tax credit (cap of \$5,000) and the 30% Fed. tax credit (which would require congressional action to nullify & is not expected; an executive order will not do it).

Marbletown would serve a “hub” community, along with the Town of Rochester for a 4-month campaign for all of Ulster County, but focused on the Rondout Valley. Solarize Hudson Valley is a program of Sustainable Hudson Valley and Catskill Mountainkeeper (both 501c3). Its role is to be trustworthy broker of information. Working with NYSEDA, SHV would manage the program. However, the success of the program depends vitally on the participation of volunteers within the community. It is the “neighbor to neighbor” aspect of the project which creates community trust and confidence. The hub communities will vet and select “partner” solar installers through the NYSEDA RFP process. SHV has worked with all of the certified solar installers in Ulster County. Of these, 2 would be selected to participate in a possible Marbletown-Rochester program. SHV is basically looking to have the ECC/Town of Marbletown provide a venue for public outreach event(s) as well as provide volunteers to conduct community outreach and staff the event(s). Timeframe for project is March - July.

Reaction among voting members was unanimous and positive. Hosting a Solarize campaign would also count as a “high impact action” in Clean Energy Community certification.

EV Fueling Stations

At the time of the meeting, Margot was working on the wording of the grant. [The grant has since been approved. Yay!] It was reported that the Town Board expressed concerns over the aesthetics of a fueling at the Community Center. It was decided that funding request for landscaping would be included in the grant proposal. Such landscaping would be overseen/coordinated by Eric. Doug was also looking into concerns regarding parking and loading access @ the annex building.

Iris suggested using permeable surface to avoid increased asphalt/impermeable paving; all agreed this would be ideal if feasible.

Other Business

Iris gave a report on the proposed Pilgrim Pipelines and also Dakota Access Pipeline, the North Dakota pipeline which would carry the same Bakken Shale fracked crude oil as the southbound Pilgrim pipeline is proposed to carry in New York. Pilgrim has been dragging its feet on SEQR (State Environmental Quality Review), giving us more time to get ready for the "scoping" phase of the SEQR process. We (Coalition Against Pilgrim Pipelines-NY) attribute this to the deep and broad resistance we have organized in the Hudson Valley, with 28 of the 31 municipalities along the direct route already officially opposed. Pilgrim is openly expressing frustration about this. In addition, we've "gone national," with actions targeting ARES Management, Pilgrim's parent company, in L.A., Chicago and New York City, with a large union ally called UNITE HERE. However, the lull could be temporary and could be influenced by the volatile oil market. We urge everyone to remain on high alert, as a new pro-oil administration coming in could spur Pilgrim to aggressively move forward on the SEQR process in early 2017.

Iris has been speaking in several states about her experience at Standing Rock in North Dakota, featuring a multi-media presentation so that indigenous voices can be heard directly. She would be interested in presenting at the Community Center or Town Hall, similar to the talk she gave in Highland Dec. 12th: "Same struggle, different place: Stopping Dakota Access Pipeline and Pilgrim Pipelines.

Restore concept @ transfer station: Nothing has happened here due to funding issues and inability to find a patron/sponsor for the project.

Plastic Bag Ban: Nothing new to report on this front.

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