



Sullivan County Agriculture and Sustainability Policy Committee

June 11, 2015 AGENDA

1:30 PM

Committee Members:

Cindy Kurpil Gieger, Chair, Cora Edwards, Vice-Chair, Gene Benson, Alan Sorensen, Kitty Vetter

Call to Order

Attendance

Comments: Committee Chair

Reports:

1. Agricultural Report- Melinda Meddaugh
2. Office of Sustainable Energy (OSE) Monthly Report- Carol Roig & Stephen Stuart

Presentation:

1. Community Choice Aggregation/ Sullivan County Pilot Project- Carol Roig and Steve Stuart

Discussion: None

Resolutions: None

Public Comment

Adjourn

Farmland Protection Plan Update: The newly formed SC Agriculture Task Force has recently developed the 1st Year Priorities for the Farmland Protection Plan. Next steps are to reach out to the project partners regarding project implementation.

Dairy Processing Project. CCE and planning staff are in the process of coordinating the details for the Catskill Mountain Dairies yogurt project for the project. We anticipate ordering the equipment in the upcoming month.

Educational Programming:

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP's) Certification, April 30 - May 1 In partnership with CCE Orange, we offered a 2 day Good Agricultural Practices Certification and Farm Food Safety Plan Certification. This certification is directed towards vegetable farmers. We were able to certify 6 farms.

Pesticide Re-Certification Workshop, May 6th in partnership with CCE Ulster and NYS Agriculture and Markets, this full day workshop offered 3.75 pesticide re-certification credits for NY and PA. Topics discussed were organic pesticide management practice, corn and small grain insect pests and diseases, crop insurance and risk management and NRCS program updates. We anticipate offering a second pesticide re-certification class in September. 5 people attended.

Introduction to Commercial Vegetable Farming, May 21st Part of our Beginner Farmer Series, this workshop was targeted towards anyone interested in starting a vegetable farm. Attendees learned about insects, disease, soil fertility, organic certifications and weed management. 11 people attended. Watch out for our Introduction to Poultry Farming on June 25th.

Educational Brochures: With support from Sullivan Renaissance, County Planning and the SC Department of Public Health, CCE is working to develop educational brochures on Sullivan County Farmers' Markets and Sullivan County Vegetable/Fruit Producers. The Farmers Market brochure will list all of the markets located in the County and provide educational information for consumers on how to shop at the market. It will also contain information on the FMNP (Farmers Market Nutrition Program) and WIC program, in order to increase the redemption rate. The Vegetable brochure will list all of the vegetable/fruit producers in the County (who are willing to be listed) and it will contain information on CSA's, farmstands, the economic impact of farming and the different harvest seasons.

Agriculture Districts: The Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board recently met to recommend parcels to be included and removed for Agriculture District #4 Eight Year Review. The Public Hearing is set for June 18th. Tentatively, the Legislature will vote at their July meeting to recommend or remove parcels. From there, the report to NYS Agriculture and Markets will be compiled. This report must be sent to NYSAM in September.

Greenhouse/High Tunnel: CCE is working directly with BOCES to complete the construction of the High Tunnel. We anticipate doing our first workshop in August on High Tunnel Management

Agri-Business Revolving Loan Fund: CCE and Planning staff are in the process of reviewing potential applications for this loan program. Staff are doing extensive outreach on this program in order to attract new farmers. We are working with WDesign and Heron's Eye Communications to develop and outreach and informational brochure. Staff are in the process of interviewing loan recipients for this brochure. We anticipate launching the brochure in August.

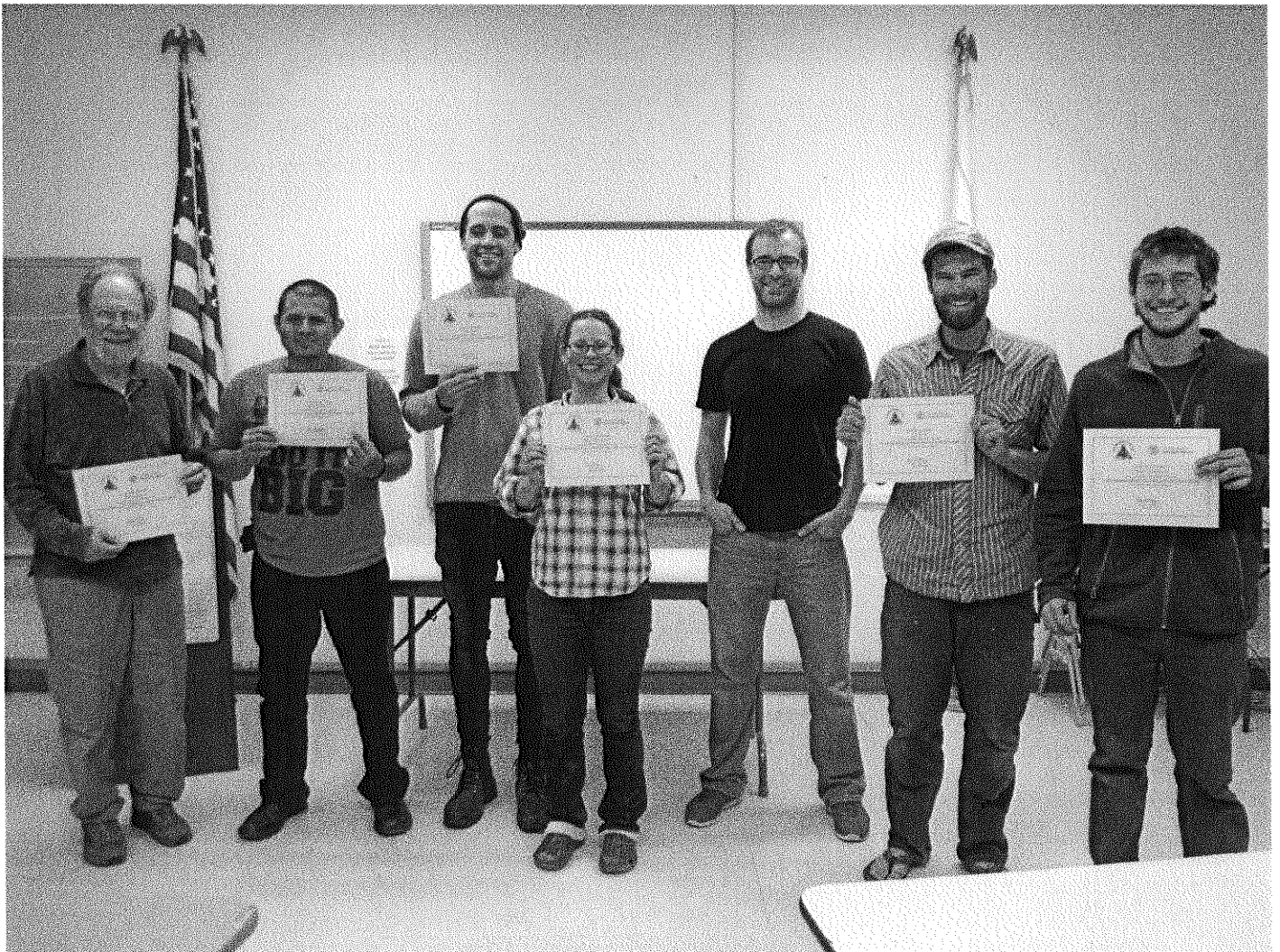
In House Assistance: Assistance included information on:

- Assistance with Livestock production
- Loan and grant information, specifically info on the County Agri-Business Revolving Loan Fund
- Information on Agriculture Districts & Agriculture Assessments
- Assistance with Dairy Processing Requirements & equipment

- Assistance with general Beginner Farmer information
- Provided assistance with business planning information
- Assistance with identifying diseases/pests
- Animal Health
- Assistance with info on processing facilities
- Information on land use resources

Upcoming CCE Classes for 2015:

Introduction to Poultry Farming, June 25th



Participants from the GAP's Training Class receiving their certificates at the May workshop.

OSE Activities Report for June 2015

Reporting on May 2015 activities

I. ENERGY MANAGEMENT FOR SC FACILITIES

All of these projects are pending:

- **NYPA Potential for HVAC replacement at SC Government Center**
- **Hybrid Vehicles for SC Fleet:** Proposed specifications are under review by DPW.
- **Solar PPA:** DPW is reviewing the stormwater management plan for the solar site.

II. COMMUNITY CHOICE AGGREGATION (CCA)

SASD has completed a preliminary draft proposal to the Public Service Commission for a pilot Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) project in Sullivan County. We are requesting a resolution from the Sullivan County Legislature to move forward with a CCA proposal to the PSC.

CCAs are made up of residential and small commercial electricity consumers. By aggregating their power purchase, residential and business customers gain the clout to negotiate low electric rates, similar to the way MEGA aggregates power purchases on behalf of municipalities for their operations.

The NYS Public Service Commission has introduced an opportunity for towns and counties to develop pilot projects that will demonstrate how CCA's would work in a variety of locales and configurations. Because Sullivan County has a fairly small population, a county-wide CCA will provide the most negotiating power for county residents and small businesses.

III. CLEANER GREENER COMMUNITIES PHASE II/ROUND THREE/CATEGORY 2 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

OSE has researched funding opportunities available through the Cleaner Greener Communities initiative. The deadline for applications for Category 2 is September 30, 2019, or sooner, if funds become exhausted. A 25% match is required, which can be dollars or in-kind. \$250,000 is the maximum for each application and eligible applicants must complete four of six action items promulgated by the program. OSE has reached out to Energy and Environment, the contractor hired by NYSEDA to field questions about Cleaner Greener Communities funding, to confirm that our contemplated projects are eligible for this funding opportunity and to determine what steps the County has taken that will qualify as required action items.

The guidance on permitted projects indicates that the funding seeks to support projects designed to address the elements of the Climate Smart Communities pledge. In particular, two of the funding offerings align with Sullivan County goals identified in the Climate Action Plan and the Comprehensive Consolidated Transportation Plan, specifically:

Replace traditional vehicles with advanced vehicles (CSC ACTION 3.12): The following strategies are eligible for funding under this project type, and could be developed fairly quickly to support rapid replacement of aging county vehicles with hybrids:

- a) Develop vehicle replacement guidelines or policies to require the purchase of advanced vehicles and alternative fuel vehicles;
- b) Use established minimum fuel efficiency requirements for the types of vehicles in the fleet, as developed in(CSC ACTION 3.10) (if completed);
- c) Select advanced vehicles or alternative fuel vehicles for purchase that suit local needs, available fuels, and local vehicle availability;

- d) Consider a bulk purchase of vehicles to receive a better price, or organize a joint procurement with other neighboring jurisdictions, to maximize your buying power;
- e) Replace vehicles as they near the end of their useful life with advanced vehicles and alternative fuel vehicles and/or replace the least fuel efficient vehicles prior to their end of life.

Implement strategies that increase public transit ridership and alternative transport modes (CSC ACTION

6.12): This opportunity is timely to consider with the unveiling of the proposed transportation plan. Local governments can implement a variety of strategies to reduce some of the barriers to transit ridership such as cost of public transit, distance a passenger needs to travel to access transit, shelter at the transit stop, access to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and parking if the passenger is driving to a central spot to take transit into an urban area. After assessing the need, applicants can apply for funding to implement one of the following strategies:

- a) Develop shuttle system to trains;
- b) Improve walkways, sidewalks and/or bikeways to trains and buses;
- c) Create covered, secure bike racks;
- d) Ensure adequate car parking near bus stops;
- e) Encourage car sharing;
- f) Provide incentives directly to riders or work with local employers to provide incentives;
- g) to employees for using public transit;
- h) Coordinate with a regional transit agency or neighboring community to expand access to public transit within the region.

Required Action Items: In order to be eligible for Cleaner Greener Communities Category 2 funding, the proposer (in this case Sullivan County) needs to have completed 4 of the following 6 action items. The action items are:

1. Implement a Green Building Strategy
2. Adopt the New York State Unified Solar Permit
3. Support Alternative Fuel Transportation Supply Infrastructure
4. Adopt a Vehicle Fleet Efficiency Policy
5. Develop a Government Operations Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Inventory and Establish a Government Operations Emissions Reduction Target
6. Enable Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Financing (Only if within the jurisdiction of the proposing local government.)

Sullivan County has met the criteria for 1 and 5. For action #1, Green Building Strategy, the County has adopted Resolution 429-07, which requires all new county buildings to meet LEED certification standards or equivalent sustainable principles, practices and technologies. There is an additional requirement to create an electronic tracking system on all new construction to monitor this. For action #5, GHG inventory and reduction targets, Sullivan County has completed the GHG inventory and established GHG reduction goals in the Climate Action Plan.

RE Action 4 - **Adopt a vehicle fleet efficiency policy.** This is called for in the above mentioned resolution, but it has to be refined with specific goals and policy statements.

RE Action item #3 – **Support Alternative Fuel Transportation Supply Infrastructure.** This would support the development of a vehicle fleet efficiency policy, and there could be opportunities in the CGC program to help develop alternative fueled vehicle charging and filling stations within the county.

Thus, action Items 1, 3, 4 and 5 are either already accomplished or fairly easily completed and compatible with the County's goals. It appears that the County can apply for projects in Phase II, Round Three, Category 2.

OSE has also researched re-submission of the **Space and Energy Study**. The deadline is now a rolling deadline, through September 30, 2019 or until funds are exhausted. The requirement to have completed 4 out of the 6 Action Items applies to this application as well. Again, we are waiting for guidance from Energy & Environment to confirm our eligibility for this project in this round.

IV. SC CLIMATE ACTION PLAN/CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES

The CSC Municipal Street lighting CSC Roundtable took place on May 19th at the Senior Center in Bethel. Representatives from Bethel, Highland, Lumberland and Forestburgh attended the meeting. Ana Hagerup of VHB Engineering, the CSC Mid-Hudson Regional Coordinators, led the discussion. Nancy Cozean, Eric Haefner and Nicholas Castro of Carmel Winwater Works, based in Poughkeepsie NY, presented the results of their analysis and of the Town of Bethel's current street lighting design and deployment, and their custom-designed strategy for the town to upgrade to LED by transitioning from Class 3 (Standard Street Lighting Service) to Class 4 (Street Lighting Service – Energy Only) with NYSEG. Two representatives from NYSEG were present for the presentation and discussion that followed.

Winwater's presentation covered key issues, including:

- Cost of the change-out, including buy-out costs from NYSEG;
- Cost savings associated with the use of LEDs, including lower energy costs and maintenance costs;
- Safety and aesthetic improvements associated with proper lighting design.

V. NY PRIZE Micro-Grid Projects Liberty and Monticello

SASD completed work with Booz Allen Hamilton (BAH) for submission of Phase 1 (Feasibility Studies) applications on behalf of the Villages of Liberty and Monticello. Letters of support were secured from the Sullivan County Legislature, the two Villages, the Town of Liberty, school superintendents of both jurisdictions, Cornell Cooperative, Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther, Senator John Bonacic, and Congressman Chris Gibson.

Booz Allen Hamilton has received preliminary notification that both projects will be funded for feasibility studies. Further details will be available as soon as BAH has completed contract arrangements with NY Prize.

Next steps: Booz Allen Hamilton will convene a Kick-off Meeting in late June for all of the team members, a NYSERDA Program Manager, NYSEG, and Siemens, Booz Allen Hamilton's partner in the design of the micro-grid.

Carol Roig and Stephen Stuart
6-2-2015