



Sullivan County Agriculture and Sustainability Policy Committee

December 10, 2015 AGENDA

10:00 AM

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: None

Discussion: None

Resolutions: None

Public Comment

Adjourn

Building Capacity, Organization, and Collaboration

Many of the problems, or lack of solution to known problems in the County, stem from not having the capacity, communication, and collaboration in place to support implementation. Agencies and organizations involved with agriculture, both within the County and the region, need to work together, efficiently use the many existing talents of staff and volunteers, find ways to eliminate duplication and fill gaps in programs, and build relationships. This initiative is a foundation for success in implementation.

IMMEDIATE-TERM YEAR 1: 2015/2016

| ACTION ITEMS | LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS | STATUS | OUTPUTS | PROGRESS NOTES |
|--|--|-----------------|---|--|
| 1.1 Establish and create the Agricultural BR&E Program Coordinator position. See Priority Initiative 2 actions. | Legislature AFPB, Ag Task Force, CCE, Planning | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PD written/approved by TF, presentation/request to Leg, Letters being collected, seeking funds | Continuation dependent upon funding. |
| 1.2 Continue to support and fund HVADC, CCEC, and Sullivan County SWCD so that they can continue to provide or expand programming that supports farms. | Legislature HVADC, CCE, SWCD | Complete | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2016 Budget drafts | |
| 1.3 Continue to promote CCEC as a major resource / one-stop shop for agricultural information in Sullivan County. | CCE Legislature, all partners listed in Key | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 weekly radio spots (farm report) • Monthly newsletter • Monthly e-news • CCE website • Farm Visits | |
| 1.4 Disseminate and coordinate information resources. Create and maintain an email/distribution list of all agencies and organizations involved in agricultural-related programs. Use a website, twitter, or blogs to share information among these entities. This should include consolidating farmer and agri-business mailing lists and email lists from agencies and organizations within the County to create a single comprehensive list that can be used. | CCE Legislature, all partners listed in key | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maple Producers List • Farmers Market List • Vegetable Producers List • Christmas Tree Producers List • Adopted CIVICRM as constituent management system, build in progress | Currently have a program assistant helping the Ag staff to create the ag database and inventory SC farms |
| 1.5 Regularly convene a meeting of implementation partners to discuss these priority project needs and assign lead agencies to carry out specific actions. | AFPB CCE, Planning, SCVA, FarmNetwork, IDA, Legislature | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Ag Task Force meetings | Meeting for all Ag partners set for January 19th |
| 1.6 Create an Agriculture Task Force to spearhead implementation and guide efforts. | AFPB CCE, Planning, Legislature | Complete | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets monthly | |

| ACTION ITEMS | | LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS | STATUS | OUTPUTS | PROGRESS NOTES |
|--------------|--|--|----------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1.7 | Schedule quarterly multi-county meetings between Planning staff, HVADC, CCE, and others as needed to facilitate more coordination between the counties in the region | Planning CCE, HVADC, Regional Planning Departments | In progress | Working with Planning Dept. to set up a fall meeting | |
| 1.8 | Build staffing capacity in order to assist farmers and agribusinesses with production and technical assistance. | Legislature AFPB, Planning, CCE | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ag BR&E position proposed to Leg. | Contingent upon funding |
| 1.9 | Create an executive summary and brochure of the plan | Planning CCE, AFPB | In progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Summary Complete Brochure under review by Planning Dept. | |

Priority Initiative #2: Agricultural Business Retention and Expansion Program

Business Retention and expansion is one of the core components of economic development programs. The purpose of a BR&E program is to communicate with local businesses in order to understand, anticipate, and ultimately address their needs, challenges, and opportunities. The agricultural business retention and expansion program will be tied to, and will in fact be critical factor in the success of, many activities and projects related to agricultural economic development.

**IMMEDIATE-TERM
 YEAR 1: 2015/2016**

| ACTION ITEMS | | LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS | STATUS | OUTPUTS | PROGRESS NOTES |
|--------------|--|--|---------|--|---|
| 2.1 | Develop marketing tools, including a website with links to programs and resources for farmers (see below). | CCE Planning, Pure Catskills, SCVA, USDA, CADE, | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCE Website SCPEM Website | Currently working to promote the Catskill Farmlink and Hudson Valley Farmland Finder website. Attended Cornell Strategic Marketing Conference to develop marketing classes for 2016 programming |
| 2.2 | Develop the Agricultural Business Retention and Expansion Program. Hire staff. | CCE/Planning AFPB, Legislature | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PD written/approved by TF, presentation/request to Leg, Letters being collected, seeking funds | Contingent upon funding. Developing an Ag Business Series for 2016. Classes include: Business Structures, Business Planning, Farm Leases & Farm Funding. |

**SHORT-TERM
YEARS 2 & 3: 2016 - 2017**

| ACTION ITEMS | | LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS | STATUS |
|---------------------|---|--|--|
| 2.4 | Develop an initial database of farms in Sullivan County | CCE Planning, Farm Bureau | <p>In progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CiviCRM adopted as constituent management system • Civi build in progress • Staff training in progress • Drafted farmer survey to collect commodity/production data • Data Collected: Maple Farmers, Vegetable Producers, dairy farmers, Christmas Tree Farmers <p>Working to develop listing to develop livestock list</p> |
| 2.5 | Develop a business visitation program. | CCE Planning, AFPB | <p>In progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal and requested farm visits occurring weekly by CCE Ag staff & ED • Formal paper survey drafted • CCE Ag Outreach Packet outline completed, folders on order • Web survey in development <p>Staff are creating folders for farm visits, which will have a survey and resources. Staff created a survey to go out to all SC farmers. One of the questions asks if they would like a CCE farm visit.</p> |
| 2.7 | Provide farmers with general business support and assistance | CCE Planning, IDA, SC Partnership, SC Chamber, HVADC, CADE | <p>In Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/1/15-11/30/15: 1000 inquiries answered at CCE • 40 farm visits, 12 workshops • Informal and requested farm visits occurring weekly by CCE Ag staff & ED • Formal paper and online survey drafted • CCE Ag Outreach Packet outline completed, folders on order • Web survey in progress <p>Developing an Ag Business Series of Classes for 2016</p> |
| 2.8 | Work with the Center for Workforce Development to assist farmers with farm worker recruitment and connect them to people looking for agricultural employment. | CWD Planning, CCE, CADE, Glynwood | |

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|------|---|--|--------------------|--|---|
| 2.9 | Collaborate regularly with agency partners to provide referrals, follow-up, etc. | CCE/Planning Agency Partners | In progress | | Scheduled an Ag partner meeting for January 19th |
| 2.11 | Simplify existing agri-business loan fund programs. Revise application forms and program descriptions so that they are easier to understand and more "farmer-friendly." | Planning IDA, SC Partnership, HVADC, USDA, CCE | In progress | Working with Planning Dept. to develop loan program brochure | On the final draft of brochure and anticipate that it will be printed in December |
| 2.13 | Work with agency partners to develop communication tools. | CCE/Planning Agency Partners | | | |
| 2.14 | Establish a website as a portal to programs, resources, and support for farmers in Sullivan County, preferably with a simple, easy to remember URL. | CCE Planning | In progress | CCE is in the process of updating our website | |

Priority Initiative #3: Agritourism Enhancement

This program will entail moving agritourism to the forefront. It will include new opportunities for both farmers and visitor's, as well as leveraging existing efforts such as Pure Catskill, Made in Sullivan County Catskills, tourism marketing and promotion, mapping and wayfinding, lodging and special events. There is a need to develop new agritourism products, experiences, and events;leverage the resources of and coordinate with existing organizations involved in agriculture and tourism; and make the County more "tourism friendly". This would provide additional opportunities for farmers to diversify and increase their incomes, while bringing valuable external dollars into the County.

IMMEDIATE-TERM YEAR 1: 2015/2016

| ACTION ITEMS | | LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS | STATUS | OUTPUTS | PROGRESS NOTES |
|--------------|---|--|----------|----------------------------|----------------|
| 3.1 | Create an Agritourism Task Force | SCVA CCE, Planning, Farm Network, | | | |
| 3.4 | Updates the Fresh from the Farm agricultural trail map online | SCVA CCE, Planning, Farm Network | Complete | SCVA completed summer 2015 | |

**SHORT-TERM
YEARS 2 & 3: 2016/2017**

| ACTION ITEMS | | LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS | STATUS | OUTPUTS | PROGRESS NOTES |
|--|--|--|-------------|---|--|
| 3.3 | Work with CCE and other partners to provide training (and assessment) on developing an agritourism enterprise. | CCE SCVA, Pure Catskills, Farm Network, Farm Credit East | | | Working to create agri-tourism workshop for 2016. Ag tourism workshop will be AG-Tourism 101 and will cover the basics of ag tourism for farmers. Working to provide a fact sheet for the public so that they are educated about farm safety in SC |
| 3.2 | Increase the participation of Sullivan County farms in Pure Catskills and/or Hudson Valley Bountly. | Pure Catskills CCE, HVADC | In progress | Developing a workplan and timeline for this | Connected with these organizations, receiving information to provide to farmers, promoting in CCE newsletter. Sent out monthly email to contacts and putting their info in our farm packets. Working on creating a small scale food processors conference, with Pure Catskills as a partner. |
| 3.5 | Expand marketing of farms, farmers' markets, farmstands, distilleries and breweries, etc., through facebook, | SCVA CCE, Planning, HVADC | In progress | Completed farmers market brochure. Worked with the Planning Dept. to apply for a Farmers Market promotion | Coordinated a farmers market manager meeting and developing the RFP for the grant. |
| Priority #4: New/Young Farmer Program | | | | | |
| <p>New farmers face barriers in four major areas including access to training, education and technical assistance, access to land, access to capital and credit and access to markets. New farmers need programs and services that enable them to acquire the information and resources they need to succeed. There is a need for an expanded effort to recruit new farmers to Sullivan County. This program represents a concerted effort to "sell" Sullivan County as a good place to farm, targeted to young farmers and the next generation of farmers.</p> | | | | | |

**IMMEDIATE-TERM
YEARS 1: 2015/2016**

| ACTION ITEMS | | LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS | STATUS | OUTPUTS | PROGRESS NOTES |
|--------------|--|---|-------------|---|----------------|
| 4.7 | Promote existing Sullivan County agribusiness loan programs and work to help new and expanding farmers understand and participate in these programs. | Planning CCE, IDA, Partnership, HVADC, Chamber, CMK | In progress | Working with Planning Dept. to finalize loan program brochure | In progress |
| 4.3 | Adapt the Orange County New Farmer Manual for use in Sullivan County. | CCE | | Staff are starting to gather information for this manual | |
| 4.4 | Create fact sheets with information gleaned from this plan, and resources from Cornell and other research that outlines market opportunities that may be viable for new farmers. | CCE Planning | | | |
| 4.8 | Increase programmatic support for Cornell Cooperative Extension educational programs in 4-H to build interest among youth in agriculture. | Legislature CCE, Planning | | | |

**SHORT-TERM
YEARS 2 & 3: 2016/2017**

| ACTION ITEMS | | LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS | STATUS | OUTPUTS | PROGRESS NOTES |
|---------------------|---|---|---------------|---|--|
| 4.1 | Provide technical training in farming to take advantage of emerging markets. | CCE Planning, HVADC, CADE, Glynwood, BOCES | | CCE receives inquiries on a regular basis about new markets, such as mushroom production, hops and small grains | Provide technical assistance and info to these beginner farmers. Working with Soil and Water to offer small grain programs for 2016. Attended a Cornell Strategic Marketing Conference |
| 4.6 | Provide incentives, and advertise existing funding opportunities for farm start-up operations. | Legislature Planning, IDA, Partnership, USDA, CMK | | | Working on brochure and farm packets |
| 4.12 | Work with the real property and tax departments of the County to identify and remove farm properties from the Tax Foreclosure list. Tie this program to a requirement that the interested farmer go through a beginner farmer training program. | Planning Legislature, CCE, Glynwood, HVADC | | Planning and CCE staff are looking into other models in the state | |
| 4.18 | Utilize NYFarmLink.com, Catskill FarmLink, and Hudson Valley Farm Link, an existing established site to post farms and farmland for sale. | CCE Planning, WAC, American Farmland Trust, Glynwood | In progress | Promote these websites to CCE inquiries. Putting their brochures in our farm packets. | |
| 4.9 | Convene a meeting of school district officials to discuss mechanisms to get schools involved in agriculture. | CCE Planning, Sullivan Renaissance, BOCES, SCDPH, SCCC, CMK | | Working on a Farm to Institution Planning grant. As part of the grant, we are interviewing school districts. | |

Priority Initiative #5: Value-Added and Diversification Initiative

This program has two parts. The first is to take agricultural initiatives already underway and make them successful. This part is oriented to good organization, planning, coordination with farmers, getting the right operators, and marketing. The second part is oriented to providing farms with training, business planning, and assistance in identifying and understanding market opportunities, and helping farmers take advantage of funding that can be used for value-added processing, diversification and expansion. This initiative will work in conjunction with the Agricultural Business Retention and Expansion Program and the New/Young Farmer Program.

IMMEDIATE-TERM YEAR 1: 2015/2016

| ACTION ITEMS | LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS | STATUS | OUTPUTS | PROGRESS NOTES |
|---|--|------------------------------|--|---|
| 5.7 Continue to develop and operate the new CCE Entrepreneurial & Teaching (EaT) Kitchen. | CCE Sullivan Renaissance, BOCES | Complete/ ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/15-9/30/15 75 inquiries answered, 7 workshops offered, 3 regular business user, 2 on deck with Ag & Markets • USDA LFPP RFP submitted & received to offset rental and course fees | Working with SCCC, Catskill Mountainkeeper and Pure Catskills, SCFMA to develop a small food processor workshop for April 8th 2016. |
| 5.2 Work with Sullivan County dairy farmers and establish niche dairy and value-added dairy products to support the dairy industry in the County. | CCE Planning, HVADC, IDA, CADE | In progress | Working with Planning Dept. to provide technical assistance for dairy processing project | Finalizing dairy processing project |

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|----------|--|--|--------------------|---|---|
| 5.3 | Promote the red meat processing facility in Liberty to livestock farms in Sullivan County and other adjacent counties. | CCE IDA, Planning, AFBP, HVADC | In progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED on RFP review committee RFP went out, applications under review | |
| 5.9 | Tap into expertise available at Cornell University, SUNY Sullivan and other regional colleges and universities to help farmers diversify their operations and develop new products and services. | CCE/SUNY Sullivan BOCES | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cornell Farm to School program: monthly meetings, draft production/price point survey, SUNY Farm development Cornell attendance at CCE Neversink Farms Tour | |
| 5.1 1 | Continue to work with and develop the high tunnel program at CCE, and develop a funding mechanism for farmers to purchase high tunnels after completing training. | CCE Sullivan Renaissance, Planning, IDA, Partnership, BOCES, CMK, NRCS | In progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High tunnel construction completed June 2015 Planted June 2015 Workshop August & November SUNY Sullivan application for high tunnel development/on campus farm | Developing workshops for 2016 BOCES students harvesting spinach and using it for their culinary class |
| 5.2 | Support diversification or value added production/expansion through Sullivan County's Agr-Business Revolving Loan Fund. | Planning CCE, IDA, Partnership, CMK | In progress | Inserting County Revolving Loan program brochure in Farm Visit packets | |

SHORT-TERM YEARS 2 & 3: 2016/2017

| ACTION ITEMS | | LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS | STATUS | OUTPUTS | PROGRESS NOTES |
|---------------------|---|------------------------------------|---------------|--|-----------------------|
| 5.4 | Determine the potential demand for other facilities or services to piggy-back on the red meat processing facility. | HVADC Planning, IDA, CCE | | | |
| 5.10 | Develop and publicize a catalog of potential niche/specialty crops that can be grown in Sullivan County. Create demonstration plots to showcase and allow sampling or use of niche/specialty crops. | CCE HVADC, Cornell | | Working with Soil and Water Conservation District on grant to do trials on grains for distilleries | |
| 5.1 | Facilitate the development of specialty farm operations and products. | CCE HVADC | | | Ag BR&E Role |

This initiative is aimed at improving the local sales of and demand for fresh, local foods. Project components include farm -to-table, farm-to-institution, and farm to business programs, as well as local marketing/public relations and a Sullivan Fresh initiative to highlight businesses that use or sell local produce and products. Although direct sales of agricultural products in Sullivan County increased dramatically, the amount of revenue should be significantly higher. Sale of farm products to institutions should also be strengthened. There is also a need to better educate consumers in Sullivan County about the benefits of eating fresh, local foods.

**IMMEDIATE-TERM
YEAR 1: 2015/2016**

| | | LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS | STATUS | OUTPUTS | PROGRESS NOTES |
|-----|---|--|--------------------|--|--|
| 6.1 | Develop a Sullivan Fresh initiative. This program reaches out to local businesses and a) works to match their needs with local products, and b) provides a "Sullivan Fresh" logo or tag line that they can use to advertise the fact that local agricultural products are sold or used. | Planning SCVA, CCE, Pure Catskills, Chamber | Started | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met with Pure Catskills, interested in building on the Fresh from the Catskills work. SCVA offered art work and assistance on this as well. | Developing the RFP for the Farmers Market Promotion Program, which will be under the umbrella of the Sullivan Fresh Initiative |
| 6.7 | As part of the Sullivan Fresh Initiative. Create a Sullivan County Buy Local initiative, message, and tag line for promotion. | Planning SCVA, CCE, Pure Catskills, Chamber | See above | | |
| 6.8 | Develop a Pride of Sullivan or Sullivan Fresh marketing/media plan to advertise these farms and farm products to the general public. Develop a campaign kit that farmers receive when they participate. These could include posters, stickers, or table tents. *MARKETING TOOL | Planning SCVA, CCE, Pure Catskills, Chamber | See above | Through Farmers Market promotion grant, we can begin to develop this initiative. | |
| 6.9 | Develop marketing brochures and rack cards promoting specific agricultural areas. | CCE SCVA, Planning, Pure Catskills, Chamber | In progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maple complete Farmers Market Complete Veg Producers Complete Christmas Trees in progress | Commodities: Livestock, Honey, Dairy, Forestry, etc. Progress dependent on funding for each brochure |

| ACTION ITEMS | | LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS | STATUS | OUTPUTS | PROGRESS NOTES |
|--------------|---|--|--------|--|--|
| 6.2 | Concentrate on expanding farmer participation in the Pride of New York and Pure Catskills branding campaigns, and continue to distribute the Guide to Pure Catskills Products throughout Sullivan County. | Pure Catskills CCE, Planning, SCVA, Chamber | | Developing a workplan for this | |
| 6.4 | Develop a local food procurement policy for Sullivan County agencies and institutions, possibly with a 10% or 20% local sourcing requirement. | Legislature Planning, CCE, BOCES, SCCC, SCDPH, | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCE Farm to Institution Planning Project to commence Oct/Nov 2015. Will collect data from local institutions re: challenges to local procurement & producers challenges to selling. Data will be used in 2017 on strategies to bridge gap. | |
| 6.5 | Request that the County of Sullivan IDA encourage businesses receiving IDA assistance to commit to local purchasing agricultural commodities and/or in some way supporting local agriculture. | IDA CCE, Planning | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested during red meat RFP development—no action thus far | |
| 6.6 | Continue existing consumer education efforts and farmers' markets to help the public understand the importance of agriculture. Incorporate cooking demonstrations and other activities as appropriate to strengthen the connection with buying locally. | CCE SCFMA, Area Farmers Markets, SCDPH, Chamber, Planning, CMK | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers Market food demos offered regularly by MG Farmers Market brochures | Additional food demo opps will begin when CHSC commences late 2015-2020. Developing educational programming schedule for 2016 farmers market season. |

Farmland Preservation Strategies

While Sullivan County is not under intense development pressure, farmland loss still occurs due to both conversion to non-farm uses, as well as abandonment farmland. Although the best way to preserve farmland is to have economically successful farmers, the complexity of issues facing farmers today makes it imperative that farmlands remain available and cost effective to farmers, especially young and new farmers. In Sullivan County, land costs may be more of an issue than the lack of lands to farm. There is a great need for affordable and accessible land. There are many methods to address protecting farmland. Some strategies are direct land preservation techniques to promoting farm-friendly regulations and training for local officials.

SHORT-TERM YEARS 2 & 3: 2015/2016

| ACTION ITEMS | LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS | STATUS | OUTPUTS | PROGRESS NOTES |
|--|---|----------------------|---|---|
| 7.4 Provide training for local officials: ⇒ Hold presentations for town officials to inform them of this plan and the tools it provides. Use the executive summary as a handout. ⇒ Provide training to planning boards and ZBAs about farming and evaluating project impacts on farming. ⇒ Provide information to towns about appointing an agricultural member to their planning board and encourage them to do so. ⇒ Provide a project review checklist for planning boards to use in evaluating projects that may impact farms or farmland. ⇒ Develop training and educational materials for assessors and for landowners to help them understand farm assessment practices and tax bills. | Planning CCE, HVADC | | Reaching out to municipalities to let them know about the municipal planning grant through NYS Ag and Markets | Working on submitting a PDR application for 2 dairy farms |
| 7.5 Provide for succession and transition planning so that farms remain active during transitions and transfer to a new generation. | CCE Planning, HVADC, Farm Credit East | Complete/ ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Succession workshop offered every other year through CCE | |

OSE Activities Report for November/December 2015

Reporting on October and November 2015 activities

Year- end Summary

We are grateful to the County Legislature, the Office of the County Manager, the Division of Planning and Environmental Management (SCDPEM) and the Department of Public Works (DPW) for their continued support of sustainability initiatives for Sullivan County. We continue to find ways to integrate energy and sustainability planning and policy into many aspects of County operations and programs for the public. Significant progress has been made on key projects, including the solar array at the Liberty Health Complex; HVAC replacement at the Government Center, and inclusion of hybrid vehicles in the County's leasing arrangements for the County fleet.

For 2016, we look forward to our continued partnership with the County to:

- Ensure that the County is grant-ready to apply for funding through the NYS Cleaner Greener Communities funding opportunities;
- Introduce a successful countywide Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) initiative for the County;
- Identify energy efficiency measures and upgrades for the Adult Care Center;
- Implement and study the efficacy of hybrid vehicles as appropriate;
- Review/revise the SC Climate Action Plan to incorporate initiatives already underway (such as the 2.3MW installation at the Liberty Health Campus) and others anticipated by the County;
- Assist with public information efforts to achieve a higher profile/greater public recognition of the County's energy efficiency and renewable energy achievements;
- Broaden the focus of the Office of Sustainable Energy (OSE) to additional aspects of sustainability;
- Work more closely with the IDA and DPEM (at their request) to provide energy efficiency and renewable energy consultations to small businesses that receive loans and mentorship through those agencies. This work began in 2015 with the invitation from DPEM to present information on energy issues to participants in their Main Street development programs.

Our work continues with Sullivan County towns that are participating in the Climate Smart Communities Program. VHB Engineering has concluded their contract to provide consultation and NYSEDA has not yet announced any plan to hire new regional consultants for CSC Program. This makes SASD's work on this front all the more critical for progress in Sullivan County. In 2016, we anticipate a focus on several major initiatives:

- Streetlighting conversions to LEDs;
- Energy Efficient Vehicles policy;
- Electric Vehicle Charging Station;
- Adoption of the NYS Unified Solar Permit;
- Developing local Climate Action Plans;
- Potential for Community-owned solar projects/shared generation.

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**
- **Solar PPA**

Solar Installation at the Liberty Health and Community Services Campus

Work began Monday, November 30th on tree clearing of 10 acres for the 2.4MW solar array adjacent to the Adult care Center. Solar City estimates that the array will provide the County with energy cost savings of \$2.1 million over 20 years/\$91,907 per year.

Given the fact that the solar installation in Liberty necessitates the clearing of ten acres of trees, SASD has researched the relative GHG reduction capabilities of the trees on site compared to the GHG that will be reduced or avoided through the use of solar energy generated by the site.

We wanted to know how much CO₂ our 2.3MW solar project would avoid (compared to the same amount of electricity generated by the traditional mix of coal, gas and nuclear), and compare that number to the amount of CO₂ we could reasonably expect the trees on the site would sequester over a similar time frame. There are many variables to be considered, including the mix of fuels used to generate the electricity used now at the Liberty site, the mix and age of the trees on the site, the anticipated life span of the solar panels, and even the GHG generated in the manufacture and transport of the solar panels to the site and other activities connected with the installation.

Considering all of these factors, and using the EPA's carbon footprint calculator, our research tells us that our 2.3MW solar installation on 10 acres of cleared ground will avoid an amount of GHG each year equivalent to the annual GHG sequestration that would be achieved by 1,623 acres of forest. In addition, the solar array will avoid the creation of other GHGs that trees do not sequester, including methane – a GHG that is estimated to be 70 times more potent as a GHG than CO₂ over a 20 year window.

Adult Care Center Energy Efficiency Measures

Follow up to September 22nd meeting with Shennoy Wellington at the Adult Care Center to discuss energy saving strategies for the facility, including replacement of the PTAC units in patient rooms with more energy efficient (and better performing) PTHP units. This replacement is a priority project listed in the Sullivan County Climate Action Plan.

- Stephen has researched PTHP for ACC. There are several brands that meet the energy efficiency criteria for NYSERDA. He will do a more in-depth analysis for recommendation.
- Stephen spoke with Kathy Jones about procurement policy for this. The County would have two good options: 1) issue an RFP for units matching NYSERDA specifications for efficiency; 2) utilize best value option that is now available for County purchases.
- We will schedule a January meeting with Commissioner McAndrew and Kathy Jones to plan next steps.
- NYSERDA's Existing Facility incentive has expired. We are keeping in regular communication with NYSERDA to monitor whether or not it will be re-charged.

II. COMMUNITY CHOICE AGGREGATION (CCA)

We expect to hear from the Public Service Commission in January or February as to the status of our application to be a demonstration project for CCA.

We continue to schedule presentations and town and village boards and community organizations. Presentation to the Highland Senior took place on October 20th. Presentations are scheduled for the town boards of Delaware, Neversink and Mamakating. The Town of Bethel had provided a letter of support, along with the Senior Legislative Action Committee and the SC IDA. Letters of support will be uploaded to the PSC in an ongoing process.

So far, town boards and audiences have been enthusiastic about the concept. Typical questions from town board members and County residents:

- What happens to the utilities?
- Will NYSEG (or O&R or Orange and Rockland, as appropriate) still repair the lines after a storm?
- Can municipalities participate?
- Will my bill look the same?

III. SC CLIMATE ACTION PLAN/CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES

The CSC roundtable on GHG emissions from septic systems took place on October 20th at the Senior Center in the Town of Bethel. Bethel Green committee co-chair Jeffrey Allison presented statistics and information about the GHG emissions from private septic systems in Bethel, and Mathew Egge of VHB outlined possible remedies, retrofits, incentives, changes to building code and strategies for public information.

Key points:

- Methane from private septic systems accounts for 49% of GHG emissions in rural communities.
- Methane is 70 times more potent as a GHG over a 20 year window, and 21 times more potent over its lifetime in the atmosphere.
- There is not much information on this issue in connection with most programs for GHG reduction, and Bethel's attention to this issue is breaking ground for the CSC Program.
- "Data drives decisions," and the committee's understanding of this issue challenged assumptions and necessitated a reorganization of priorities for Bethel.
- Most municipal sewage treatment facilities use aerobic technology and are not producing methane.
- Private septic systems are anaerobic, and therefore produce methane; in addition, many older systems are in unknown condition and may not be properly maintained.
- A retrofit is available, which includes an exhaust vent with an activated charcoal filter that captures methane. The cost is about \$100, and the filter must be changed periodically. Chemical additives are not effective.
- EPA "Septic Smart" program has information
- We discussed a variety of strategies, including:
 - rebates for the filters/bulk purchase in partnership with suppliers and installers
 - rebates for inspections to identify problems
 - consumer strategies like low flow appliances and avoidance of bleach and harsh cleansers
 - broad educational outreach throughout the County
 - build awareness among building inspectors/code enforcement officers/public health officials
 - capture details about systems in the building permit/renovation process
 - consider requiring aerobic systems for new construction
 - develop inventory and baseline metrics to enable measuring of progress
 - green building tax incentive could include aerobic system or vented system
 - conversion to aerobic systems when an existing system fails

V. NY PRIZE Micro-Grid Projects Liberty and Monticello

In September, Booz Allen Hamilton issued a formal request for energy use data from villages and other stakeholders. SASD has provided support and outreach to help stakeholders get their information to BAH. The initial deadline of October 28th was extended to allow stakeholders time to respond.

Michelle Isenour and Aaron Willis from Booz Allen Hamilton visited the key sites in Liberty and Monticello on November 18th, and met with Carol to provide a status report. They were preparing for a Friday, November 20th meeting with NYSEG, which went well. BAH still needs meter information and authorization letters from the Village of Liberty and from Sullivan County, and we continue to provide support in securing this information.

Booz Allen Hamilton will submit their Phase 1 Feasibility Studies for Liberty and Monticello by February 28, 2016. We continue to answer questions and provide background information to supplement load data from the key stakeholders. The BAH team seems confident that at least one project will move to Phase II.

VI. Presentations and Community Education

SASD participated in several panel discussions at the Callicoon Art Walk on Saturday, October 10th, on topics including renewable energy systems, energy efficiency, the Climate Smart Communities Program and CCA.

In consultation with Heather Brown, we will work over the next few months to develop a more cohesive and robust public information campaign to make sure County residents know about the projects and achievements of the County and participating towns.

Carol Roig and Stephen Stuart
12-3-2015