

Rye Sustainability Committee Minutes

June 2, 2021 / 9:30 AM / By Zoom

Attendees

PRESENT:

Patti Capparelli, Chair (PC)

Gretchen Kaye Crowley (GKC)

Sue Drouin (SD)

Sara Goddard (SG)

Pamela Haas (PH)

Judi Linton (JL)

Linda MacKay (LM)

James Ward (JW)

Donna Providenti (DP) - guest

Gary McLoughlin (GM) - guest

Missing

Suzanne Clary (SC)

Chris Cohan (CC)

Amanda Sackay (AS)

Agenda ([Draft RSC Agenda 6.2.21.pdf](#))

Minutes (Minutes 6/2/2021)

The Committee convened at 9:30 A.M.

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved by unanimous agreement.

New Business:

The committee unanimously approved James Ward as co-chair of the committee (vs. vice chair), to share the leadership load. As per Noga, City Council approval needed.

Visitor introductions:

Donna Providenti heads up the Environment Committee at Milton Elementary School. She has an interest in renewables and the clean energy community.

Gary McLoughlin (Gary Mack) teaches at the Rye Arts Center and Manhattanville College. He is currently pursuing his Education for Sustainability certificate at Manhattanville. Has an interest in helping with the Pollinator Pathway project with projects, lesson plans, and school coordination. He has an annual (January) STEAM program called Bridges at Milton School.

JW suggested GM could get involved with the Blind Brook cleanup being planned by a Rye Middle School teacher. PC mentioned that RSC works with the high school Sustainable Solutions group, and there could be opportunities coming up for September.

Energy:

SG re: Unified Solar Permit - After a meeting of the Architectural Review Board, she and Richard Mecca, Greg Usry, Chris Miller met. They are interested in the Board continuing to review solar installations, and otherwise they're fine with Rye just going forward. Richard Mecca or she will present this to the Mayor. She will put it on the City Council agenda to discuss and adopt.

PC: Do you need documentation about what is excluded from the Solar Unified Project? SG: It's in the comments and will serve as the basis for discussion.

JW presented the current status of Rye's Clean Energy Community points earned and needed in order to qualify for state grants. We are close to the 4000 points mark, with 3100 points that could get us a \$10,000 grant. But 4000 points could give us \$20-30,000. SG suggested a council workshop as a way to work out concerns over code enforcement for NY Stretch.

JW suggested municipal benchmarking and advanced reporting as targets for next work, which could quickly net us 500 points. PC asked whether the December 30 deadline for NY Stretch code meant adoption only, and JW confirmed that. SD suggested we need to promote it to the public, e.g. using JW's presentation, and SG recommended a mailchimp send with a PDF attachment. We can update our Climate Smart Communities article on the RSC website and refer to it in the email.

JW presented regarding the Gas Inventory, and will send information to the committee. SG will connect JW with the person at Westchester Power for more accurate numbers for JW to use. PC noted that in 2009, there was no electric in our fleet, to keep that in mind, and that affects our score.

Waste Reduction/Recycling: LM presented a Food Scrap Recycling update. With curbside renewal at 156, she contacted 47 on the FSR wait list and was able to add 18, so that leaves 173 still on the curbside wait list. JL has 15-20 new signups for FSR and is looking for new ideas to recruit, eg. the farmers market. The City has stopped selling supplies to the more than 600 registered households, except for the green bins. Now they want to provide a link to suppliers; PC is still working with them to settle on an approach. GKC talked about possible campaigns to reach more households, eg. using local celebrities for "who you might meet at the DPW dropoff -- doctors, lawyers, etc.; a Scrape the Plate PR campaign... She will share a document. LM shared that when she tried to work with the schools, results were not great. Feedback from the Environment Club was that students lacked interest, drive, and time.

LM went to a workshop at RPI; Bedford 2030 wants to pick our brains -- we are a leader!

Tonnage was discussed; PC says for February/March it was 5.11, which should be shared on social media.

LM mentioned that incorrect information is being circulated about how far our scraps have to be transported; the truth: The county has said that food scraps are transported to Cortlandt, or to the Ulster composting facility, depending on volume.

SG shared that no other City service demands so much volunteer action in order to exist or be popular. There has not been a single complaint from the community about the FSR program. The rumors are a red herring: Commingled scraps go to Ulster County in one truck, vs. having them incinerated.

PC pointed out that the City doesn't provide information about processing facilities for any other recycling.

Water/Land Use:

JW wanted to sign us up for water monitoring with the DEC, but it's not working out because there is a very regimented time to monitor. He has learned that Rye is generally OK, but Blind Brook contains high levels of E coli.

Healthy Yards/Pollinator Pathway:

There is a new conservation contact (Genaro) at Rye Nature Center for plants because Danny is leaving.

Potential Westchester Pollinator Garden Tour sites were discussed by JL. Our intern Emma Jackson has been visiting potential organizations who can be put on the Pollinator Pathway map and perhaps could also be visited during the tour. She is emailing prospects.

PC has spoken with Elizabeth Poyet in Larchmont/Mamaroneck about door hangers being distributed there about the leaf blower ban. They have people who could speak to us.

Community Outreach/Awareness:

PC asked for FSR volunteers for the next month (July 7 at 8:30) at the Farmers Market.

Other Business:

Upcoming meetings: July 7, 2021 9:30 am

Meeting Adjourned at 11:00 am.