



**LONG ISLAND
CLEAN ENERGY LEADERSHIP
TASK FORCE**

Mission: Facilitate the exchange of information and ideas and work to identify regional leadership that advances the promotion of plans, policies, and programs to reduce our carbon footprint, cut local air pollution, save energy and money, build a clean energy sector on Long Island, and create green jobs. — A project of the Sustainability Institute at Molloy College

Molloy College Suffolk Center, Farmingdale, NY



Welcome and Introduction

Neal Lewis, executive director of the Sustainability Institute at Molloy College, welcomed the group and provided some context and updates for the meeting, reminding the attendees that the *L.I. Clean Energy Leadership Task Force* had been working for 12 years with LI municipalities.

Mr. Lewis related that at the last meeting the *Task Force* had hosted a panel of seven speakers to discuss the issues raised by proposals for large-scale solar projects. “If you wish, we had a real, live solar panel,” he said. Since that meeting, the town of Brookhaven has acted to prohibit most ground-mounted solar projects. This puts even more pressure on the need to advance other clean energy initiatives, especially solar for large commercial roofs, solar carports over parking lots and offshore wind.

Neal informed the group that some of the speakers they would be hearing from at *Task Force* meetings would address these concerns. At this meeting, they would hear about PACE financing, which can be used to finance solar on commercial roofs and parking lots. At the next meeting, there will be a solar carport case study presentation, and an update on the offshore wind proposal that may be approved by the LIPA board in December.

Mr. Lewis reported progress on LIRR 3rd Track proposal, which would be good for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging more people to leave their cars at home and take the train, while also serving

to improve train services and reverse commuting that would enhance efforts to build transit oriented development in downtowns near train stations. There is more information about the third track proposal at amodernli.com.



Neal Lewis

The Sustainability Institute has sent letters to town and village officials regarding the changes in the NYS Conservation Construction Code. New home construction requires compliance with a higher standard of energy efficiency and also stricter compliance documentation. Unfortunately, the State did not fully embrace the solution that has been adopted by most Long Island towns to require an independent HERS Rater to complete plan reviews, inspections and performance tests to ensure compliance with the stricter standards. The State has taken some steps to improve compliance with the new home energy conservation requirements, but we believe they have missed an opportunity to take what is working on Long Island (requiring HERS Rating for all new homes) and make it a standard statewide. New York has a problem of failing to achieve better compliance rates, and as a condition to accepting funds under the 2009 ARRA stimulus package, they promised to develop a plan to achieve 90% compliance. Rather than embrace the approach that is working on Long Island, the State has instead developed a plan to encourage more training of local government building code enforcement officers.

Clean Energy Communities Program Kicked-Off on Long Island



Sara Oral

With many representatives of Long Island’s local governments in attendance, Sarah Oral of Cameron Engineering introduced the new NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities program. Clean Energy Communities is designed to encourage local governments (including counties, towns, cities and villages) to take specific high impact actions that will reduce their carbon footprints, save tax dollars by lowering governments’ energy bills, and stimulate the local economy by investing in clean energy infrastructure. This voluntary program is designed as a competition for grants. There will be 18 grants, with no matching funds required, made to Long Island communities that complete at least four of ten high impact actions.

High Impact Actions

- *Benchmarking*—Commit to regular tracking and reporting of energy use in municipal buildings. Large communities must also require commercial building to benchmark their energy use.
- *Clean Energy Upgrades*—Take measures to reduce energy used in government buildings by 10%.
- *LED Street Lights* —Convert 50% of ‘cobra-head’ style streetlights to LED.
- *Clean Fleets*—Purchase and put into service an alternative fuel vehicle or install a refueling or charging station for alternative fuel vehicles.
- *Solarize* —run a group-purchasing campaign to reduce the cost of solar PV for residents.
- *Unified Solar Permit*—adopt rules that streamline and regularize the permitting of residential solar PV.
- *Energy Code Enforcement Training*—have code officials participate in free training offered by NYSERDA on the new building code.
- *Climate Smart Communities Certification*—document a large number of actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve resiliency to climate change.
- *Community Choice Aggregation*—establish ‘opt-out’ program to provide energy choice to residents. Not applicable on Long Island.
- *Energize NY Finance*—enact commercial PACE financing. Nassau and Suffolk Counties have already moved on this action.

It was explained that not all of these actions are available to all communities. Some can only be taken at the county or city level, while some others can only be taken by governments that have zoning authority.

The NYSERDA grant is funding four Clean Energy Coordinators on Long Island, who will reach out to and provide technical assistance to local governments in adopting and implementing the high impact action. The CEC Coordinators were all in attendance, were introduced to the group. The CEC Coordinators for Long Island are Sarah Oral, David Tepper, William Achnitz and Andrew Manitt. Municipalities that are interested in participating should contact Sarah Oral, who will put them in touch with the CEC Coordinator assigned to their community.

Communities that move quickly to complete four of the ten high impact actions will be rewarded with a grant that can be used to invest further in clean energy. The grant is very flexible and does not require a match. There are a limited number of grants, so only those communities that move quickly will receive them. However, the available grants are distributed to regions throughout the State. Therefore Long Island communities are only in competition with each other, and not with other areas throughout the State. Also, there are two tiers in the program, so lower-population communities are not in competition with their larger neighbors.

Funding Levels

In each of New York State’s Economic Development Regions (REDCs), funding levels are as follows:

Municipality Size by Population	Tier 1 Awards Number of Awards in each Economic Development Region and Amount		Tier 2 Awards Number of Awards in each Economic Development Region and Amount	
	Large (40,000+)	2	\$250,000	2
Small/Medium (0-39,999)	4	\$100,000	10	\$50,000

PACE Financing



Sammy Chu

Sammy Chu provided an overview of the history of PACE on Long Island. The concept was pioneered in Babylon, as the result of an idea of Dorian Dale's. That program helped to upgrade the energy performance of 1,000 homes.

Mark Theilking, Executive Director of the Energy Improvement Corporation, explained to the group how the commercial PACE program works. The Energy Improvement Corporation is a local development corporation, which offers commercial PACE financing under the brand of Energy New York.



Mark Theilking

Once a county or city adopts legislation allowing PACE and joins the board of the Energy Improvement Corporation, owners of commercial properties get access to low interest financing for upgrading their buildings' energy efficiency or adding renewable energy. Financing through PACE is easier for businesses without perfect credit, and it can pay for 100% of the cost of a project, without any money out of pocket.



Lisa Broughton

One particular area that PACE has made a big difference is in affordable housing owned by non-profits. They often have a hard time getting funding and offer great opportunities for saving energy and money, while improving the comfort and safety of the residents.

Suffolk County has already adopted PACE, and Nassau is on the way to finalizing their adoption. Mr. Theilking noted that PACE would not have been adopted by Suffolk County without the work of Lisa Broughton. Ms. Broughton reported that about 30 solar projects are in the pipeline in Suffolk and three were about to close at the time of the meeting.

Questions and Answers

Q—Can geothermal heating and cooling be funded through PACE and is PACE funding available for new construction.
A—PACE can fund geothermal, if it is cost effective. It can be used to fund renewables installed at construction, or the incremental cost of building to a higher efficiency standard than required by code.

Q—Can not-for-profits participate, if they are not taxed?

A—Yes. Not-for-profits can be sent a bill from the taxing entity that includes a service charge that is not a tax.

Q—Is PACE available for residential homes?

A—No. At this time, PACE financing is only available to business or not-for-profit owned properties. It is hoped that changes in policy on the federal level will make it possible to offer PACE to individually owned homes in the near future.

Electric Vehicles

Erin Reilly of the Town of North Hempstead provided an update on the progress of the EV Charging Station Network Project. The project is funded by a Cleaner Greener Communities grant from NYSERDA and is intended to plan and install a network of level 2 EV charging stations across Long Island, to allay 'range anxiety' and make switching to electric vehicles more practical for Long Islanders. The Town has been negotiating with NYSERDA and is close to signing a contract.



Erin Reilly

The coalition that is led by North Hempstead will be conducting a planning a feasibility study, to determine priority areas and locations for charging stations. Then there will be outreach to locations. A third-party private operator will be chosen to install and operate the network of at least 32 charging stations.

Nicholas Palumbo, Executive Director of Sustainability Programs, at Suffolk County Community College raised the possibility of creating a coalition to promote electric vehicles on Long Island. Sammy Chu pointed out that USGBC has a sustainable transportation committee, which could work with the new coalition. Ron Gulmi mentioned that there is a AAA Electric Vehicle Group chapter on Long Island, headed by Carl Vogel. There was general interest in the idea, and it was agreed that emails should be sent to gauge interest and begin formation of the group.



Nick Palumbo

Long Island Green Homes



Chuck Schwartz

Chuck Schwartz, Executive Director, Long Island Green updated the group on the progress of the Long Island Green Homes program. In the first year of the program, about 1,100 homeowners have contacted LIGH and about half of them have gotten home energy audits. They are working on software solutions to provide better feedback from contractors, so that clients can be tracked better through the process.

The administration of the free audit and many of the rebates and incentives are being transferred from NYSERDA to PSEG Long Island in 2017. With the Building Performance Contractors Association (BPCA), Long Island Green Homes identified gaps in the plans for the new benefits. Representatives of PSEG attended a special meeting with the BPCA, hosted at the Sustainability Institute's offices, and were responsive to the concerns raised by the members of the industry. One large remaining gap in coverage is that there is no source of rebates for efficiency measures for the over 150,000 gas heat customers without central air conditioning.



Mr. Schwartz also reported on a pilot project in Southampton, where residential energy efficiency was being promoted along with solar PV and peak power reduction efforts. They have been finding that although interest in solar bring many people to the program, a large percentage end up signing up for a home energy audit. Lynn Arthur who is running the program noted that 100% of most audiences who hear the presentation sign up for one or the other, or both.



Pictures from Q&A



If you would like receive copies of any meeting handouts or materials, please call the Sustainability Institute at 516-323-4510.

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