



CITY OF BUFFALO
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

BYRON W. BROWN
MAYOR

To: Members of the City of Buffalo Climate Smart Community Task Force
From: Mayor Byron W. Brown *BWB*
Date: June 13, 2019

Purpose of the Climate Smart Community Task Force

The impacts of global climate change are becoming more evident every day and its effect on our communities have become more pronounced. The increasing regularity of extreme weather events, instances of failing infrastructure and higher rates of respiratory illnesses are only a few of the consequences the nation – and the world-- are presently facing as a result of the global community's delayed response to the first signs of human produced Green House Gasses' (GHG) negative impacts. While some regions, like Buffalo's, may be spared the worst consequences of global climate change, we will still be profoundly impacted. Therefore, we have an obligation to take the necessary steps that will mitigate the worst effects of climate change while also planning how to maintain vibrant neighborhoods, thriving business districts, accessible housing, and a robust infrastructure when Buffalo is confronted with those effects.

The City's Climate Smart City Task Force has been convened to help guide the City in its implementation of the ten elements of the Climate Smart Pledge. Reducing the amount of human produced GHG is a multi-faceted effort that will require the cooperation of local government, residents, the faith-based community, business leaders, labor leaders, institutes of higher-education, non-profits and philanthropic organizations. Task force membership also represents the diverse groups whose livelihoods and communities may face drastic changes as a result of Climate Change in the very near future. Their input will be critical to crafting a response to these challenges in a manner that is both inclusive and environmentally sound.

Membership of Climate Smart Community Task Force

Members will be comprised of local government policy makers, community residents, policy area experts from local institutes of higher education, business community representation, a youth representative, and other advocates. Members were invited to participate and commit to meeting six times a year.

Tasks of the Climate Smart Community Task Force

The Task Force will be charged with guiding the City's implementation of the Climate Smart Communities Pledge. Specifically, the Task Force will:

- Review future implementation plans the City develops to reduce GHG production;
- Foster relationships between the academic, business and advocacy communities that will ensure more coordinated action to reduce GHG production;
- Recommend funding opportunities the City may wish to pursue in order to implement Climate Smart Community goals;
- Assist in the implementation of a community outreach effort that will educate and engage residents to become more involved creating a healthier environment; and
- Broaden the number of participating organizations that will work with the City to combat global climate change.

Implementation Timeline and Evaluation

Following the organizational meetings in May and June, where members will review the materials to be submitted to New York State for Buffalo's Climate Smart Community certification, the Task Force will reconvene every other month. Task Force members will evaluate the progress the City is making in its progression of fulfilling the pledge.

Task Force Coordination

Kelley M. St. John, Resiliency Grants Manager for the City of Buffalo, was appointed by the Mayor's Office as the City of Buffalo's CSC Coordinator. The Resiliency Grants Manager is responsible for coordinating across City departments to advance the City's Sustainability and Resiliency Strategy and identify resources to execute it, specifically with the goal of enhancing the City's ability to respond to, mitigate against, and better prepare for extreme weather events as a result of global climate change. The CSC Coordinator role involves facilitating meetings of the Task Force, directing communications, preparing materials for certification, and tracking progress against Climate Smart Pledge goals.

Role	Name	Affiliation	Title
Staff	Rob Mayer	City of Buffalo	Director of Policy
	Kelley St. John	City of Buffalo	Resiliency Grants Manager / CSC Coordinator
City Representative	Oswaldo Mestre	Office of Citizen Services	Director
	Brandye Merriweather	BUDC	VP - Downtown Development
	Susan Attridge	Streets & Sanitation Buffalo Sewer Authority /	Director of Refuse and Recycling
	OJ McFoy	Buffalo Water	General Manager
Community Representative	Jason Kulaszewski	UB Regional Institute	Clean Energy Coordinator
	Nicholas Rajkovich	UB Architecture Department University District Community	Assistant Professor
	Darren Cotton	Development Association	Community Development & Planning
	Zoe Hamstead	UB Planning Department	Assistant Professor
	Ilyas Khan	WNY Environmental Alliance	Student (Youth Representative)



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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT



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ROB MAYER
DIRECTOR OF POLICY

KELLEY M. ST. JOHN
RESILIENCY GRANTS MANAGER,
CSC COORDINATOR

City of Buffalo Climate Smart Communities Task Force
 Thursday, May 30, 2019 4:30 – 6:00pm, 209 City Hall

Name	Affiliation	Sign
Kelley St. John	City of Buffalo	<i>Kelley St. John</i>
Rob Mayer	City of Buffalo	<i>Rob Mayer</i>
Oswaldo Mestre	City of Buffalo	<i>Oswaldo</i>
Justin Bailey	City of Buffalo	
Susan Attridge	City of Buffalo	EXCUSED
Brandy Merriweather	Buffalo Urban Development Corporation	<i>B. Merriweather</i>
OJ McFoy DBA Tracy King	Buffalo Sewer Authority	<i>OJ McFoy</i>
Jason Kulaszewski	UB Regional Institute	<i>J. Kulaszewski</i>
Nicholas Rajkovich	University at Buffalo	<i>Nicholas Rajkovich</i>
Darren Cotton	University District Community Development Association	EXCUSED
Kelly Asher	Buffalo-Erie County Food Policy Council	
Ilyas Khan	Youth Representative	<i>Ilyas Khan</i>



Climate Smart Communities



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Minutes

1. Welcome – Kelley St. John, CSC Coordinator & Rob Mayer, Director of Policy
 - a. Overview of meeting
2. Introductions
 - a. Brandye Merriweather, VP Downtown Development, Buffalo Urban Development Corporation
 - b. Oswaldo Mestre, Director, Office of Citizen Services, City of Buffalo
 - c. Ilyas Khan, WNY Environmental Alliance, Youth Representative
 - d. Jason Kulaszewski, Clean Energy Coordinator, UB Regional Institute
 - e. Nick Rajkovich, Assistant Professor of Architecture, UB
 - f. Tracy King, Press Information Officer, Buffalo Sewer Authority
3. Overview of Climate Smart Communities program
 - a. Introduction to Climate Smart Communities
 - i. Mayor's commitment to Buffalo being a Climate Refuge City, announced during the 2019 State of the City address
 - ii. Top priority of administration to address the impacts of climate change
 - iii. Climate Smart Communities is an action-oriented metrics-based certification program sponsored by NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation and five additional state agencies, to encourage and support local-level climate action initiatives that mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt communities to a changing climate.
 - iv. This is a NYS specific program; there are 262 Registered Communities and 24 Certified Communities (as of Jan 2019).
 - v. The City of Buffalo is currently a **registered community**, after passing the Mayor's sponsored resolution adopting the Climate Smart Communities Pledge through Common Council on April 30, 2019.
 - vi. The Climate Smart Communities Pledge includes 10 pledge elements, each with different associated actions communities can pursue.



- vii. The CSC program is connected to NYSERDA’s Clean Energy Communities program, which focuses specifically on energy sector-related actions communities can pursue to mitigate climate change.
 - viii. Clean Energy Communities is supported through Regional Coordinators; Jason Kulaszewski is the WNY Region coordinator.
 - b. Certification and program updates
 - i. CSC registration and certification is all completed electronically through a web-based portal with DEC; the CSC Coordinator is responsible for completing these efforts.
 - ii. Applications for certification are accepted three times per year, in January, April, and July, but documentation uploading can occur on a rolling basis. Buffalo’s goal is to submit for certification with the upcoming deadline of July 5, 2019.
 - iii. The program currently has two certification levels: bronze and silver. The gold-level certification is currently being evaluated and redeveloped. Each level of certification has associated points and actions:
 - 1. Bronze, 120 points with 3 priority actions
 - 2. Silver, 300 points with 6 priority actions
 - 3. You can review the certification actions here: <https://climatesmart.ny.gov/actions-certification/actions/>
 - iv. Buffalo anticipates it will receive an initial certification of bronze, with the goal of increasing our action-oriented point accumulation each year.
 - c. Role of community engagement in local climate action planning
 - i. The CSC Task Force is a priority action within the first pledge element, “Build a climate-smart community,” as is identifying a CSC Coordinator.
 - ii. The Task Force functions to provide education and connection opportunities between its members and their representative groups, across departments and sectors, and assist the City in preparation of climate action planning efforts.
4. Mission of CSC Task Force
- a. The Task Force is charged with guiding the City’s implementation of the Climate Smart Communities Pledge, specifically to foster relationships, increase funding opportunities, implement community outreach, and broaden the number of organizations in the City’s efforts to combat global climate change.
5. Questions from Group / Discussion
- a. Interest in exploring funding opportunities for economic development in the Downtown area as it relates to mobility and transportation improvements; potentially align with new transportation demand management plan (TDM).
 - b. Would we like to engage the business community? Yes, but not at this stage. The City is committed to the Climate Smart Communities implementation at the grassroots level, where communities inform a reasonable pursuit of policy

change over the next ~5 years, then taking action to engage businesses. The effort will focus on community relationship building and policy objectives.

- c. For consideration: discussion of how we discuss/educate/(re)introduce climate change to Buffalo's communities; with attention to "in the know" vs. "don't know" and how climate change connects to the concerns of citizens.
 - d. Municipal leadership with grassroots action and engagement
6. Next meeting: June 27, 4:30-6:00pm, City Hall
- a. We will determine a set date/time for each meeting at this time. Following this organizational meeting in June, the Task Force will assume a bi-monthly meeting schedule beginning in August.



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Justin Bailey	City of Buffalo	
Susan Attridge	City of Buffalo	<i>Susan Attridge</i>
Brandye Merriweather	Buffalo Urban Development Corporation	<i>Brandye Merriweather</i>
OJ McFoy	Buffalo Sewer Authority	<i>O. McFoy</i>
Jason Kulaszewski	UB Regional Institute	<i>J. Kulaszewski</i>
Nicholas Rajkovich	University at Buffalo	*joined remotely* <i>NR</i>
Darren Cotton	University District Community Development Association	<i>Darren Cotton</i>
Ilyas Khan	Youth Representative	<i>Ilyas Khan</i>
ZOE HAMSTEAD	UB	EXCUSED.
<i>KENTIA WALKER</i>	<i>BUFFALO SEWER</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>



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Minutes

1. Welcome – Kelley St. John, CSC Coordinator
 - a. Introductions from members joining for the first time:
 - i. Susan Attridge, Director of Refuse and Recycling, City of Buffalo
 - ii. OJ McFoy, General Manager, Buffalo Sewer Authority
 - iii. Darren Cotton, Community Development & Planning, University District Community Development Association
 - iv. Kevin Meindl, Green Infrastructure Specialist, Buffalo Sewer Authority
 - b. Overview of meeting
 - i. Review application status, future activities and certification plans, organizational discussion
2. Mayor Brown's Executive Memorandum formalizing the Task Force [an electronic version shared with all Members]
 - a. The Mayor's memo certifies the convening and work of the Task Force with the charge of guiding implementation of the Climate Smart Community pledge through recommendation of responses that address the challenges posed by climate changes in the City of Buffalo.
 - b. Members are invited to participate and commit to meeting six times per year.
 - c. Names the City's resiliency grants manager, Kelley St. John as CSC Coordinator and outlines expectations of role.
 - d. The success of the Task Force is reliant upon our ability to connect people in the community with the efforts we are presenting, building connection between City Hall and the Community through our work.
3. Update on Climate Smart Communities application
 - a. Working toward bronze certification for **July 5, 2019** application deadline: internal deadline for documentation, July 1; internal completion deadline, July 3.

- b. Current program stats
 - i. Documentation is complete for approx. 170 points across 21 actions
 - ii. Pledge elements 9 and 10 are the only areas we do not have actions prepared to upload documentation for in this application cycle.
 - iii. Outstanding requirements - 13 actions remain for documentation upload; waiting for information from a handful of sources
- 4. Next steps – team has identified 10+ actions for certification in 2020; CFA opportunity; August meeting
 - a. Next set of actions for certification will be discussed at remaining 2018 meetings, along with if there are additional actions we would like to pursue to work toward silver designation
 - b. City is submitting a Climate Smart Community grant application for the CFA Round IX, due July 26, 2019 focused on a climate action plan for local government operations. The Task Force will be instrumental in that planning process.
 - i. This initiative will overlap with much of the ongoing and recently completed large planning initiatives of the City, including, but not limited to: Smart Cities; Buffalo Green Code; downtown development and TDM planning; etc.
 - c. Next meeting: August 2019 – request that each Task Force member come to next meeting with a community nominee for addition to the Task Force. Plan to add 2-4, total of ~15 members.
 - i. “Community” refers to the spheres of influence and space in which all of the current Task Force members work; taking a broad view to ensure our Task Force reflects the City it serves. Think outside the box!
- 5. Organizational Planning
 - a. Meeting schedule – next meeting will be in August, last two weeks of month (after anticipation notification date of August 16, 2019).
 - i. Kelley will send around a Doodle Poll to determine date
 - ii. Task Force will meet every other month thereafter (October, December)
 - b. Meeting locations – half of meetings to be held outside of City Hall; invited suggestions for locations, formats, opportunities to go “beyond the boardroom” and make meetings educational and interactive. Suggestions:
 - i. UB Hayes Hall + tour of Solar Decathlon house (GRoW Home)
 - ii. Northland Workforce Training Center + redevelopment zone
 - iii. Unity Island Wastewater treatment facility + Green infrastructure zones

iv. Presentation from UB researchers about GHG mitigation through waste

6. Discussion

- a. Consider the knowledge and outreach gaps we currently face in relation to climate change and the community, considering the work of the Task Force and the realms of service of the Members. How can we better communicate what is needed to be communicated?
 - i. Youth – the purpose of, and for city policies that relate to climate change
 - ii. Community-wide – translating the connections between climate changes, impacts, and daily life
- b. Discussion about presence of a lack of validation, a credibility gap and the necessity of building trust in the community around climate conversations; internal (community) and external (third party) validators that bring their own authenticity.
 - i. There are community organizations that exist that are “doing the work” to share messages, educate, and inspire.
 - ii. Public events in partnership with community organizations would be an opportunity to share information and show-up for the community; to connect with residents in their daily lives, purposefully and inclusively.
 1. WNY Environmental Alliance, Youth & Climate Justice Fellows
 2. Love Your Block program, mini-grants opportunity
 - iii. The Task Force can identify and uplift existing projects and programs in the City that support the CSC initiative through local examples; validation comes when those individuals that are consistently identified as community leaders begin integrating the work in casual conversation.
- c. The Task Force will support changes in policy that shift the narrative to focus on a climate resilience future; we can learn from previous communication and policy mistakes.
 - i. Between City Hall and the Community, the Task Force can act as an equalizer; it is part of our job.



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