

Climate Smart Task Force Meeting Minutes
March 9th, 2022 @ 5:00 PM
North Tonawanda City Hall

Board Member Attendance - Austin Tylec, Brian Wudyka, Debbie Gondek, Emily Root, Timothy Pieper, Emily Root, Jim Berry, Michael Tuzzo, Erin Robinson

Absent/ Excused- Robert Depaolo, Frank Dibernardo

Call to order - 5:05 PM

I. Follow Ups on past and Present Projects

Benchmarking

- Energy Audits have been sent in- Reports were not created by crimson
- All city buildings have level 1 audits. There is no documentation of this- Rob D may have documentation.
- We have gotten approval through National Fuel- although we do not have access to records as of right now.
- Still need bills for the street lighting and traffic lights.
- Need fuel estimate from 2019

Complete Streets

- No changes-
- Was passed by the council
- Must send NYS The council meeting minutes of the approval of complete streets - Deb G will upload.

Charging Station

- Funding source has not replied in regards to money
- City may have lost the grant funding due to missing email
- Austin will Reach out once again
- Canal Corp may be another funding source available

Inventory

- Waiting on Crimson to give us access to the portal

II. Solar Farm Zoning

*** Maureen has finished the rough copy of the zoning laws***

Did not include visual impact statements

Wetlands were included

***Mini workshop should be done with all department heads before council approval**

Recycling/ Decommissioning - Emily R

- **Referenced in local law starting on August 1st the manufacturers must be responsible for the recycling of Solar energy panels**
- We will reference this law into our local law
- Recycling must follow Niagara county law
- A city engineer/ building inspector must come to a solar energy farm once a year to see if the solar panels are running efficiently.
- Note that the City of North Tonawanda is not responsible for garbage pickup on these types of projects.

Pilot Programs - Erin R

- **Pilot has been left out for now- CSC will listen to Common Councils comments and change where it seems fit.**
- **City would need a public hearing to vote on opting “out” - There would not be exemptions on taxation. Only certain tiers would have to pay taxes**
- **If a big project will be exempt from taxes they must require a pilot- Maureen will look into it and add.**
- Erin will look for existing links for information on opting out and being able to collect taxes.
- City assessor must be trained in assessing solar
- If we did “Opt Out” the city must contact the State Tax Department and NYSERDA*
- The city needs to focus on assessing property used for solar farms correctly
- Businesses should be forced to pay different prices compared to a residential solar parcel
- Commercial properties have different regulations

- Template is located on the google drive

Landscape- Michael Tuzzo

- NO pesticides allowed on solar farms
- Maureen will add details to glare regulations
- Sight must include shrubbery, and trees
- Anything that will require planning board review must have an architectural landscaper
- Builders must identify if they have reached out to the DEC
- Should require 2 sight plan reviews 1st for proposed changes and 2nd for the approval.
- North Tonawanda is Urban- we must maintain residential zones and not allow it to be used for industrial scale solar farms
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III. Project Progression

- Group has 115 with documents submitted
- Fleet inventory, Recycling bins, bike paths projects will be completed once we go for silver level.
- Doing a couple of other tasks will prevent us from falling short of Bronze level
- April 8th will be deadline for Bronze certification

IV. Adjournment-

1st; Austin T 2nd; Deb Gondek