



ONEIDA COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

Boehlert Center at Union Station
321 Main St., Utica NY 13501
Phone: (315) 798-5710 Fax: (315) 798-5852

ANTHONY J. PICENTE, JR.
County Executive
James J. Genovese II
Commissioner

Climate Smart Communities Task Force Meeting #2 - Minutes

August 13, 2024 at 2:00 PM

Oneida County Department of Planning

Conference Room, 3rd Floor

Union Station 321 Main St.

Utica, NY 13501

Introductions and Attendance

Ed Stevens	Director, Oneida County Emergency Services
Chris Henry	Assistant Engineer, Oneida County Department of Public Works
Shaun Kaleta	Director of Economic Development, Oneida County
Joshua Olbrys	Executive Director, Oneida Herkimer Solid Waste Authority (OHSWA)
John Adams	NYSERDA Hub Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida County
Matt Baisley	Commissioner, Oneida County Department of Public Works
John Waters	Technical Assistant, Oneida County Water Pollution Control
Amanda Whalen	Clean Energy Communities Coordinator, Mohawk Valley Economic Development District
Samantha Fransisco	Clean Energy and Climate Smart Communities Coordinator, Mohawk Valley Economic Development District
Kristin Campbell	Chief Planner, Oneida County Department of Planning
Amy Heiderich	Senior Planner, Oneida County Department of Planning

The meeting opened at 2:02 PM by Amy Heiderich, speaking on behalf of the Climate Smart Communities Task Force Coordinator, James Genovese II. Everyone introduced themselves and the agency or department they represent.

Mohawk Valley Economic Development District (MVEDD) Coordinators

MVEDD has two coordinators who assist municipalities with obtaining Climate Smart Communities (CSC) and Clean Energy Communities (CEC) certification through NYSERDA.

The coordinators explained the types of assistance they can provide Oneida County and will help with any questions as the task force discusses actions completed and how to

upload achievements. Coordinators can examine Oneida County's application prior to submission to ensure the correct documentation has been uploaded into the portal

Additionally, the coordinators can look at linkages between Clean Energy Communities and Climate Smart Communities and assist with procuring grants through the CEC.

Certification Action Checklist Items

PE3 (N/A) Energy offsets can gain points by using the microturbines at Water Pollution Control. Whatever unit of energy that is currently being used can be input into a portfolio manager. According to the representative from WPC, the microturbines are offsetting a lot of electricity at the Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP).

PE 3.2 It was mentioned that items such as lighting upgrades, due to the amount of paperwork required to get the points, may be something that we should ignore for the moment. It would be difficult to gather all the information from all of the buildings and input it into a cohesive document. It is unknown but doubtful that one already exists.

PE3.7 Adopting a green building standard for government buildings is something that can get points since both 300 and 301 W. Dominick St. require construction due to tornado damage. Adopting Energy Star standards is acceptable. Several municipalities will adopt standards but not invest in the actual certification. It needs to be determined if this action requires a resolution to be passed. If so, it can be worded as such to highlight the economic benefits only. This can be an efficiency standard versus a green building policy.

PE3.8 New green building certification – DPW is working with SUNY POLY on a potential storage facility that may be made of alternative materials. The building will be approximately 30,000 square feet but should be easier to construct since it is only for storage. It will be located in the vicinity of the current DPW building on Judd Rd.

PE3.8 A question was asked about the addition to the Cornell Cooperative Extension Building. DPW explained that the cost of geothermal is too high at this time and there is a law change that should bring the cost down. No timeline for construction yet.

PE3.11 Fleet rightsizing will most likely consist of vehicle pooling among departments that do not utilize the department vehicles often. The data collection will be completed in the summer of 2025, and the data will be used to determine where to share vehicles and who may require additional vehicles to prevent individuals from collecting mileage on personal vehicles. The DPW would need this in place for policy creation and inventory changes. The DPW does have asset management software but is cautious about sharing information with New York State. Several municipalities turned down this option out of fear of being forced to convert vehicles before the end of their useful life.

MVEDD would not need VINs; it would just need the vehicle information to assist with finalizing this.

PE3.15 Planning needs to get the streetlight count and data from the DPW to see if we can get any points for converting. All outdoor lighting upgrades are internal DPW projects. Forms for this are available in the portal of the Clean Energy Communities toolkits.

PE3.24 Environmentally preferable purchasing policy would be something the County Attorney's office could include as the County is currently updating the purchasing policy

PE3.25 On-bill recovery/energy service contract could be an option for financing government energy projects.

PE3 (N/A) Energy code enforcement training is not something that Oneida County offers since code enforcement is handled by municipalities. Oneida County does have a safety officer as an advisor on this that could benefit.

PE4.4 It was mentioned that the Oneida County-owned forested land needs to be quantified in preparation of selling Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) to local colleges. Steps that need to be taken:

- Find out who is looking to purchase credits
- Conduct an assessment
- Find out what the offset would be
- Find out where we would get the credits from

The DEC is working on new initiatives regarding RECs. A question was asked about the solar that Oneida County owns as possible credits. The solar farms are leased panels. The electricity is already accounted for.

PE4.5 Air source heat pumps can also be split systems. To earn points, DPW would need to provide the installation and efficiency information for anything after 2016. Credit is based on square footage. For upgrades to count, it must meet some sort of efficiency standard. The County Office Building does not have gas heat, it is all heat pumps.

PE5 (N/A) The Organics Management Plan is handled by the Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Authority (OHSWA). OHSWA should have all the components for this plan. Oneida County gave OHSWA the information required and the point structure for submission.

PE5 3.23 To conduct a solid waste audit in Oneida County-owned buildings, we would require information from OHSWA and Waste Management. OHSWA is aware that this will be on the data request.

PE5 3.20 Office waste and recycling is an issue since every office has its own trash can. DPW is considering utilizing communal trash and recycling bins jointly. When this happens, Oneida County will be able to achieve points for this action since the action requires there to be a recycling bin next to every trash can. If this can happen, Oneida County will hold a recycling education webinar hosted by OHSWA.

PE5.13 OHSWA holds several recycling events throughout the year and has information on. OHSWA is to send that information to Oneida County.

PE6.17 It was mentioned that the City of Utica recruited students at Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) to conduct their tree inventory. Possible for students to assist with Natural Resources Inventory for Oneida County. There is discussion about re-engaging the Oneida County Environmental Management Council and Water Quality Coordinating Committee that would assume responsibility for something like this inventory.

It was suggested to send a link to communities within the watershed commissions of Oriskany Creek and Sauquoit Creek since as of now, only Clinton/Kirkland has a CSC Certification. Some communities may be interested but may not know how to get started. Their actions would be able to count under Oneida County since Oneida County assists with managing the watershed commissions.

PE7.9 One low-hanging fruit item is that Oneida County will provide an upfront link to local cooling centers on expected hot days directly from the Oneida County website. This needs to be screenshot and added to the submission list. When the Hazard Mitigation Plan is updated again, there should be more focus on extreme heat since it is becoming more of an issue in the region. NYSERDA has high energy demand information. This is an item that would need a resolution passed to address.

PE7.21 Planning to send point information to DPW for bridges and culverts that have been replaced and rightsized on County roads.

MVEDD mentioned that the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is being updated and suggested that we add any economic development projects to that database.

PE8.3 Green Economic Development Plan

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:12 PM. It was decided that Tuesday at 2:00 PM is typically a good time for this group to meet so the next meeting will be scheduled for this day and time in approximately one month.

