



Climate Action Plan Working Groups

Energy Working Group Meeting Notes #1 - November 19, 2019

Introductions and stating of top priorities:

Deb Italiano, founder of Sustainable Jersey City

She is enthusiastic about GHG Inventory. Would like to see commercial building sector reduce its footprint through legislation.

Ways to do it: Residents have received a lot of information re upping efficiency, but it would be great if commercial sector had mandate (along the lines of New York City's legislative model). Retrofitting would be boom for local economy.

Sam Ringelberg, works at Schneider Electric

His responsibilities include reviewing ways to make existing buildings more efficient.

Very supportive of Climate Action Plan (CAP) initiative. If it can focus on existing buildings (through improved efficiency and retrofitting), it would lessen the need to construct new buildings.

Matthew Kaplan, on the board of Green Building Council of NJ

The Council is involved with energy audits on existing buildings, helping towns get cleaner energy programs utilizing Pay for Performance, etc.; works with Passive House.

Looking at breakdown of stationary energy per building type is an important direction for this group to pursue. Review availability of PACE financing and Stretch Codes (whether Jersey City has authority to enact certain climate-action activities like these).

Leverage redevelopment plans (as Hoboken has) to require sustainability and climate-action objectives. Energy Aggregation.

Gahl Spanier, works for Association for Energy Affordability (energy efficiency for low income housing)

The Association is in NY and CA; active with Passive House (buildings with high efficiency, stay warm 200 hours after energy off, use very little energy; efficiency comes from well-installed installation, etc., electric heat pump systems).

Advocates educating people about what is available for making houses and buildings more energy efficient. Recognizes challenges on regulatory level, but advocates reaching out to people about resiliency and passive houses and other high-efficiency models. Three passive houses in JC (1 in Heights)

Erin Hill, works for NJDEP

Works on solar and energy policy; also has background in environmental education, BPU clean energy program.

Passionate about renewable energy sources.

Dawn Zimmer, former Hoboken mayor, works for Schneider Electric

Really supports this initiative and feels JC can lead on this.

Redevelopment process is powerful tool that can help community use such things as geo-thermal; energy resiliency is important; feels strongly about improving micro-grid technology (enables more solar, more battery storage, resiliency, stability, and more distributed energy).

Concern re existing buildings: How do you go beyond outreach and incentives to get people to actually change the fuels they use, retrofit, etc.?

Seena Berg, Hudson County Sierra Club representative

Passionate about equity piece of this work and wants to share Sierra Club perspective.

“Ready for 100,” Sierra Club declaration advocating getting to 100 % renewable energy.

Chris Hitchcock, group moderator and lawyer

Feels benchmarking can be implemented at the early stages and should be mandated since that, in itself, results in energy savings and is an important tool for reducing carbon emissions in buildings.

Discussion:

- Incorporate micro-grid technology and more distributed energy for a combination of buildings, public and private.
- Importance of getting PSE&G involved, especially in light of 2018 NJ Clean Energy Act.
- Portland, OR has passed legislation that, through a development tax, provides funds to low-income residents for home energy assistance.
- NJ Affordable Housing Trust Fund possibly could be used for community solar and energy upgrades.
- BayFront development is an opportunity for Jersey City to implement sustainability and energy efficiency requirements in a new project. However, although the current plan for this development stipulates it provide 30% affordable housing, the project, surprisingly, doesn't have energy-specific requirements.
- Possible funding for JC buildings to provide incentives to retrofit*:
 - ESIP – for municipalities, school buildings
 - RGGI
 - NJ Green Bank
 - NJ Infrastructure Bank
 - BPU Clean Energy Program

*However, the 2018 NJ Clean Energy Act requires utilities to propose and implement a plan to reduce the use of both electricity and natural gas. Accordingly, starting in mid-2020, PSE&G will be instituting a program that likely will supersede existing NJ energy programs.
- Kate Lawrence mentioned these things to keep in mind when shaping proposals:
- CAP is focusing on mitigation (and adaptation to a lesser extent).

- Groups are to propose both interim and long-term goals.

Obstacles to Goals:

- The gathering of energy data through benchmarking can face a lot of resistance by business community.
- Discussed how benchmarking can be enforced.
- Hard to get tenant by tenant to contribute data – better if building as a whole reports usage.
- Importance of assessing energy efficiency specifically by building. Need to know where the dirtiest usage is, etc. Look at by facility type, ownership type, location.
- Redevelopment plans – municipality has authority over whether development can proceed, therefore it can make certain demands. Again, Hoboken’s plan serves as a good model.
- Opt-out energy aggregation, (way to get electricity from renewable sources and residents can opt out).
- Possible problem: Does this really help if the energy source is outside of NJ? Does it reduce air quality emissions in JC?
- Gina _____, head of sustainability for NYC dept of buildings, is JC resident who has expressed desire to get more involved. Matthew will reach out to her.
- Review climate action plans of cities that have progressed further than JC, such as Boston, Seattle, Chicago, and Toronto.
- Utilities are big on energy efficiency, but less so on renewable sources and distributed energy
- Unions & training piece (Dept. of Labor grants). Currently lack of workforce to perform retrofitting for electrification.
- PSE&G’s current proposal has education & training piece.