

Rosendale Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes for April 11, 2024.

Approved: August 8, 2024

Present:

Amie Worley, Chair

Darrell Hamlin, Vice Chair

Susan H. Gillespie, Secretary

Sean Nixon

Jenn Sturiale

Excused: Penny Coleman

Absent: Town Liaison: Tim Craven

Guest: Martin Einemann

The meeting was called to order at 6:42 p.m. The agenda was accepted.

With a quorum established, Amie moved to accept the minutes from the March 14 meeting; Jenn seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

1. Mr. Einemann expressed concern regarding posters that have been attached to telephone poles in Tillson, which are improper and unsightly. He is seeking advice on how to approach the town to have them removed. The matter does not fall within the responsibility of the Environmental Commission, unfortunately, but we agreed to look into it informally.

2. Plant and Seed Swap

The Plant Swap, which was organized cooperatively with the Rec Commission, was an impressive success and well attended, with close to 100 participants, including many from neighboring towns (Highland, Gardiner, Kingston, New Paltz, Saugerties). The increased number of visitors was ascribed to the new location at the Community Center, which is accessible and convenient, plus publicity on social media and in the local press. Possible changes for next year would include reducing the event to 2 hours, instead of 3. It was suggested that the REC send personal invitations to members of the Town Board.

3. Community Solar update

There is a new development in the Community Solar program, as solar developer Clean Energy received federal funding that will allow qualified customers, who meet the threshold for affordability program participants, to receive a 20% discount on their electricity bill, instead of 15% as previously planned. Susan reported that the campaign had been discussed at the Town Meeting on April 10, and that the Town Board had voted to support the project, on condition that a new letter and press release clearly lay out the terms of the changed offer, and the letter is approved by the Supervisor and interested board members before it is sent. The REC was also asked to make relevant information available on the Town's website. Members of the Town Board expressed interest in installing additional car chargers, and suggested the Community Center as a location.

ACTION: Susan will find out whether the 20% credit is available to income-qualified residents in parts of town that are not currently identified as a DAC area and therefore not currently scheduled to receive the invitation letter.

ACTION: Susan and Penny will DRAFT a new letter for approval by the Supervisor and Town Board, aiming for May 8 or 15.

ACTION: Susan, working with Penny, Darrell, and Amie, will draft language for publication on Facebook and on the town website.

4. REC Social Media Presence

The planned Facebook group will be called "Friends of Rosendale Environment." It will not be an official town publication, but will help promote actions of the REC. Susan motioned, and Jenn seconded a motion to adopt the proposed name. Unanimously adopted.

5. Membership

At the Seed Swap, a resident of Tillson named Dawn expressed interest in joining the REC.

ACTION: Jenn and Amie will follow up with the Rec Commission to contact Dawn.

6. Compost program

Susan reported that the plan for the compost program came up at the Town Meeting, where it was explained that residents using the landfill pay a general fee plus a smaller fee each time they drop off recycling; there is no problem about staff there handling recurrent small payments. Pickups are weekly; bear protection is a priority. Other details still need to be clarified, such as how to determine the amount of compost that will be collected.

ACTION: Penny is to call NYSERDA to clarify whether Rosendale's current \$10,000 CEC grant is available for composting.

ACTION: Susan, Penny, and Jenn will meet with the Supervisor after the REC's draft composting plan is finalized.

7. Solar Siting

There is interest on the part of the Town in exploring the feasibility of an array in the field behind the Municipal Center, and on the landfill if that site is feasible.

ACTION: Susan and Penny will explore the possibility of a Build-Ready grant from NYSERDA to pay for a feasibility study or studies.

8. Geothermal and Solar status at the Rec Center

Members of the Recreation Commission have determined that the solar system on the building is barely functioning and may be ripe for replacement.

ACTION: Jenn will invite Muffy to report to the REC at our next meeting.

9. Tree Commission

Sean has written a first draft of the grant application for 10-12 trees.

ACTION. Sean will talk with the Corps of Engineers to ensure there is no problem with the proposed location, which is not in the riprap, but on a level section just above it. He will also run the plan by the Highway Department before presenting it to the Town Board for approval.

10. Central Hudson rate hikes

Susan reported that the Town Board unanimously passed the Memorializing Resolution against the proposed Central Hudson rate hike.

11. CEC program support.

Susan reported that the Clean Energy Communities (CEC) program is asking for letters of support.

ACTION: Susan will research templates for such a letter, which would come from the REC, and potentially also from the Town Board.

12. Outreach and Education

No discussion. Deferred until the May meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Susan H. Gillespie