

TOMPKINS COUNTY Climate and Sustainable Energy Advisory Board
Wednesday, March 8, 2023, 4:00-6:00PM
Draft Minutes
Meeting Facilitator: Brian Eden

Attendance

Member		Member		Staff	
Andrea Aguirre	E	Tony Ingraffea (associate)*	A	Hailley Delisle	P
Sara Culotta	P	Stefan Jirka	E	Darby Kiley	P
Veronica Pillar*	P	Guillermo Metz	P	Kristin McCarthy	P
Brian Eden	P	Gavin Mosley	P		
Danielle Eiseman	E	Alex Rakow (associate)*	A		
Rebecca Evans	P	Sarah Schnabel	P		
Evan Hallas	P	Irene Weiser	P		
Robert Howarth (ex officio)*	P				

*Non-voting member

Guests: Anne Koreman, Gay Nicholson Martha Robertson

1. Call to Order/Agenda Review – Facilitator Brian Eden called the meeting to order at 4:03pm. No changes to agenda. [Note: Later in the meeting, Item 10. Discussion: EPA Adoption of Coal Combustion Residuals as a “National Enforcement and Compliance Initiative” was pulled due to time constraints.]

2. Approval of Minutes – The draft February 2023 minutes were approved (motion by Sarah Schnabel, second by Sara Culotta) as submitted. Motion carried.

3. Public Comment – Martha Robertson shared that NYS Assemblyperson Anna Kelles testified on the environmental impact of cryptomining before a U.S. Senate subcommittee.

4. Member Updates – Bob Howarth updated group on latest developments with implementation of the NYS Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, voicing his frustration with pushback from fossil fuel industry. He also shared details about some of his recent interactions with the media. Other member reports touched on building electrification legislation, NYSEG rate case, a career change from private sector to academia for Ian Shapiro of Taitem Engineering, decarbonization, plastics reduction and recycling, and more.

5. Presentation: Packaging Reduction & Recycling Act – *Jennifer Congdon, Beyond Plastics*
 Brian introduced Jennifer, who gave an overview of Beyond Plastics efforts to advocate for extended producer responsibility and plastics reduction and recycling nationwide. Her talk and the subsequent discussion covered numerous topics. These included pending NYS legislation, improved environmental standards for packaging, taxpayer support for plastics recycling and reduction, regulations versus voluntary corporate promises, municipal government concerns related to staffing and budget for waste management, shifting burden from consumers to producers for full lifecycle of products, industry pushback, and more. Members segued from this conversation to dive deeper into whether to support current bills up for consideration by New York State.

6. Discussion: BPRAA Resolution
 Members discussed whether to craft a resolution or letter in support of NYS bills related to extended producer responsibility for packaging reduction and recycling (informational materials were included in March agenda packet). Topics included best timing in regards to state budget negotiations, upcoming

PEEQ committee meeting, collaborating with County Recycling & Materials Management staff, connections made by Veronica and Annie with NYS legislators at NYSACC conference, and discussions among legislators regarding a resolution in support of pending NYS environmental and energy legislation at recent meeting. Members agreed to recommend adoption of a resolution in support of NYS legislation related to extended producer responsibility for packing reduction and recycling. This agreement hinged on specific CaSE members (Brian, Irene) continuing to work on behalf of board with Annie and/or Veronica to determine whether to advocate for passage of this legislation now or to request New York State delay action until after the current state budget session is completed. If latter is deemed more appropriate, possible next steps include CaSE penning letter arguing for need to allow more outreach to citizens and public hearings related to these important issues.

Action: Brian Eden made a motion, with a second by Sarah Schnabel, to adopt a resolution in support of **S.4246 (Harckham; Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act)**, and **S.1064 (May; Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging)**, recognizing that it is a “sense of the body” recommendation by CaSE and that final language will be crafted after today’s meeting. It will also be determined whether a resolution in support of this legislation or a letter advocating for delaying action until current state budget session is over would be the best next step.

7. Report: Building Code Administration Study Meeting – Darby Kiley, DPS

Darby shared highlights from recent conversations held among county and municipal representatives as well as other community stakeholders around building code administration in the County. Topics covered included enforcement, code consistency, training resources, energy and climate specific education, and more.

8. Report/Discussion: Ithaca Thermal Energy Network Meeting – Sara Culotta, DPS

Sara reported on a stakeholders call to discuss NYSEG’s proposed Thermal Energy Network in the downtown Ithaca area. She shared highlights from that conversation and about NYSEG’s proposal in general, seeking to gauge CaSE members’ feedback on whether to submit comments to the Public Service Commission (PSC) in support of the project. The latter would fall under the PSC’s proceeding to implement requirements of the Utility Thermal Energy Network and Jobs Act, for which comments are due April 4. Given that deadline falls before the next full meeting of the CaSE Board, the members agreed (“sense of the body”) to support Sara in submitting comments on behalf of the board as their elected chair.

9. Discussion: Ulster County Executive Order on Implementation of the CLCPA – Hailley Delisle, DPS

Hailley shared highlights from the County’s Climate Action Plan, which was completed five years ago. Her brief report touched on similarities and differences between work being undertaken in Tompkins and Ulster counties. Discussion covered multiple topics, including timing of update to County comprehensive plan, culling a list of priority actions related to climate for county to undertake, redundancies with CLCPA goals, and best next steps for possible collaboration between legislators, CaSE members, and staff.

10. Discussion: EPA Adoption of Coal Combustion Residuals as a “National Enforcement and Compliance Initiative”

Item pulled from agenda due to time constraints.

11. Chair’s Report: Board Activity Updates (as needed)

Sara thanked Veronica Pillar for jumping with two feet to learn about CaSE and shared she had a

productive conversation with new legislator Susan Currie. Members who haven't connected with legislators yet for a one-on-one listening session should do so in the near future.

12. Staff Report (as needed)

No report.

13. Meeting Wrap-up

Rebecca Evans will facilitate the April meeting.

14. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 6:02pm.