

**TOMPKINS COUNTY Climate and Sustainable Energy Advisory Board**  
**Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023, 4:00-6:00PM**  
**Final Minutes**  
**Meeting Facilitator: Martha Robertson**

**Attendance**

Member	Member	Staff
Andrea Aguirre	P Tony Ingraffea (associate)*	A Terry Carroll P
Sara Culotta	P Guillermo Metz	P Hailley Delisle P
Veronica Pillar*	P Alex Rakow (associate)*	P Kristin McCarthy P
Brian Eden	P Martha Robertson	P
Danielle Eiseman	E Sarah Schnabel	E
Rebecca Evans	P Irene Weiser	P
Evan Hallas	P	

\*Non-voting member

**Guests:** Bruce Balch, Peter Bardaglio, Jaden Beck, Scott Bochenek, Louise Bruce, Sara Hess, Susan Holland, David Kay, Marie McRae, Gay Nicholson, Sean Sullivan, Hilary Swartwood, Joe Wilson, Gerry Wiley, Mark G, Peter Hinkley, Gavin Mosley, Holt Bradshaw

**1. Call to Order/Agenda Review** – Moderator Martha Robertson called the meeting to order at 4:02pm.

**2. Approval of Minutes** – The draft October 2023 minutes were approved (motion by Sara Culotta, second by Rebecca Evans) as submitted. Motion carried. [Editor’s Note: Minor edits were made to the chair’s report prior to the meeting and a revised version was circulated with the meeting reminder for members to review.]

**3. Public Comment** – Guests briefly introduced themselves. Peter Bardaglio shared that the Ithaca 2030 District is in the middle of completing annual building performance reviews with property owners.

**4. Member Updates** – Evan confirmed that he will lead the December meeting and invited members to submit agenda items. Irene Weiser informed the group about the NYSEG RG&E long term gas planning proceeding and shared an article by Peter Mantius raising concerns about energy usage and potential environmental impacts from a project at the Seneca Army depot. Martha Robertson announced the release of the ninth edition of the Compendium of Scientific, Medical and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking and Associated Gas and Oil Infrastructure, highlighting its conclusion that fracking is unsafe and harmful to health and climate. She also suggested keeping an eye on the PEEQ committee schedule for 2024 and adjusting the timing of Case meetings as needed to avoid conflicts with deadlines for submitting PEEQ agenda items, and thanked Terry Carroll for sharing the draft County Green Building Policy update. Rebecca Evans reported on the Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program, which is delayed due to pending approval from the Public Service Commission.

**5. Staff Report & DRAFT Green Building Policy (for internal discussion only)**

Hailey Delisle reported that a heat pump training was held on Oct. 30th at the library with over 30 attendees. The training was aimed at code enforcement officers and heat pump installers and was administered by industry professionals. Terry Carroll then provided updates on a meeting he, Hailley,

and Rebecca had with NYSERDA officials. The meeting included presentations on the County and City's clean energy initiatives, the two digital twin projects, the CCE Tompkins workforce development project, and a hydrogen pilot project. Rebecca added that she was encouraged by the NYSERDA officials' receptiveness to feedback and their willingness to explore pilot programs in the region. Terry also shared that he will be speaking at the Facilities & Infrastructure legislative committee meeting next week about an MOU with NYSERDA to conduct a clean energy project at the airport.

Terry presented the draft County Green Building Policy, highlighting its focus on promoting sustainability throughout the building lifecycle. Key points included establishing a project team and sustainability lead, aiming for LEED Gold certification for new construction, requiring life cycle assessments with a 5% reduction in global warming potential, and encouraging zero-emission construction practices. The policy also promotes on-site material reuse, addresses fossil fuel usage in daily operations, and will incorporate bird-friendly practices. Other topics covered included LEED certification and waste reduction and management. Martha, Evan, Andrea, Brian, and Guillermo agreed to work with Terry to fine-tune the policy. Next steps involve stakeholders providing feedback through a collaborative document or via email, aiming to finalize recommendations in time for the December Case Board meeting. Peter inquired about the policy's impact on new construction. Terry expressed concern about potential cost-related resistance and encouraged support for the policy.

#### **6. Report/Discussion: Fracking 2.0: Using CO2 to Extract Methane – Irene Weiser**

Irene presented the board with information about a mailer that went out to some residents of Tioga County regarding a proposed project by a company called Southern Tier CO2 to Clean Energy Solutions. The project aims to capture and store carbon dioxide while simultaneously extracting natural gas and generating electricity. Key points include the company offering landowners \$10 per acre for land leases and the project utilizing an experimental technology that injects CO2 into the ground to extract methane. While the company claims it will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, concrete evidence supporting this claim is lacking. Several concerns surround the project, including potential violations of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, the experimental nature of the technology and its possible negative environmental impacts, the lack of evidence supporting the claimed emissions reduction, and the risk of landowners being taken advantage of. Moving forward, Irene will continue researching the project and keep the board informed. Members posted the company's website and an article about a similar 300 megawatt power plant in Texas in the chat.

#### **7. Presentation: Future Grid Impact of Ithaca Electrification: Siemens NYSERDA Project**

– *Christopher Matos*

Chris presented a high-level overview of the NYSERDA FutureGRID project with NYSEG and City of Ithaca to assess the impact of electrification on the distribution system for the City of Ithaca. The project team studied the impact of three major load modifiers (EV vehicle load, building electrification, and distributed electrification) on distribution feeders and provided a GIS map for visualization. Chris' presentation covered the project scope, timeline, and key takeaways, touching on topics such as impact of cold temperatures on electricity demand, duration versus quantity of subsidies, economic barriers, potential for solar PV, and planning for infrastructure upgrades and extreme weather events. In addition, Chris shared a few of the team's recommendations for policymakers. These included providing incentives for early adopters of electric heat pumps, developing programs to help low-income residents convert to electric heating, investing in the distribution system, developing extreme weather response

plans, and conducting further research on the impact of electrification on air quality and grid reliability as well as other topics. The study is a starting point for future planning efforts, and NYSEG representatives in attendance remarked that the company will be incorporating the study's findings into its own work. The Q&A discussion covered multiple topics. These included the importance of accurate forecasting to avoid overbuilding or underestimating future load requirements, the need to consider population growth and economic factors in forecasting, the impact of climate change on future energy needs, and more.

#### **8. Chair's Report/Board Business**

Sara provided an update on the Cayuga salt mine resolution before delving into a discussion on board organizational matters. The group discussed continuing the rotation of meeting facilitation responsibilities, forming a membership and nominating committee to fill the vacant board seat and elect officers for 2024, and piloting a Google form to streamline agenda submissions. Evan, Andrea, and Rebecca volunteered for the membership and nominating committee, and staff shared that an e-news blast will go out shortly to advertise the vacant seat. Additionally, Martha invited those interested in providing staff with feedback on the Green Building Policy through a small working group to reach out to her. The group also reiterated the point made earlier about monitoring the 2024 PEEQ meeting schedule in anticipation of potentially adjusting the timing of Case Board meetings for optimal alignment with legislative deadlines.

#### **12. Meeting Wrap-up**

Martha thanked the presenters and attendees for their participation.

#### **13. Adjournment** – Meeting adjourned at 5:57pm.