

**TOMPKINS COUNTY Climate and Sustainable Energy Advisory Board
Tuesday, Aug.27, 2024, 4:00-6:00PM (Via Zoom)**

Final Minutes

Meeting Facilitator: Danielle Eiseman

Attendance

Member	Member	Staff
Andrea Aguirre	P Danielle Eiseman	P Terry Carroll P
Jaden Beck	P Rebecca Evans	P Hailley Delisle P
Louise Bruce	P Guillermo Metz	P Kristin McCarthy P
Sara Culotta	P Martha Robertson	P
Veronica Pillar*	P Sarah Schnabel	A
Brian Eden	P Irene Weiser	P

*Non-voting member

Guests: Anne Koreman, Gay Nicholson, Savannah Vega

1. Call to Order/Agenda Review – Facilitator Danielle Eiseman called the meeting to order at 4:03pm.

2. Approval of Minutes – The draft July 23, 2024, minutes were approved (motion by Irene Weiser, second by Sara Culotta) as submitted. Motion carried.

3. Public Comment – No members of the public were present.

4. Member Updates – Members reported on various items of interest. These included Climate Week in New York City, the NYS Public Service Commission’s public hearing on the NYSEG resiliency plan, and a briefing on a national polluter pay bill. Additionally, members discussed the opening of the all-electric Asteri/Downtown Ithaca Conference Center building, the ongoing public comment period for the NYS building code update, and a rally in Syracuse to protest the governor's focus on nuclear power and neglect of renewable energy goals.

5. Chair’s Report – Sara led group in discussion over whether to hold an in-person meeting before the end of the year, with strong interest in possibly having it at the new downtown conference center. After considering alternative dates, the board settled on holding the meeting the week of December 2. This decision aimed to avoid a lengthy gap between meetings. Group talked about the rise of Covid-19, and noted they could adjust plans if cases spike. Next steps include checking with conference center staff about availability, potential tours, and whether the space can be reserved free of charge. Sara announced that she won't be reapplying to CaSE, expressing gratitude for her five-year experience on the board. Members thanked Sara for her contributions. At Sara’s request, Brian provided an update on the NYS Building Code Council and group confirmed upcoming meeting facilitation schedule. Last, Sara reminded everyone of their discussion framework, focusing on county-specific problems or opportunities and proposing solutions.

6. Staff Report – Hailley Delisle provided updates on several key initiatives, including the Legislature's passage of the "Navigating Electrical Outages" plan, progress on the Electric Vehicle RFP, the status of

the Induction Cooktop Program, and the ongoing success of the Business Energy Advisors Program. Terry reported on the Caswell Solar project, stating that it is currently on indefinite hiatus due to NYSERDA's concern with increased interconnection costs and overall project costs.

7. Discussion: Case Board Comments at PSC Public Hearing on NYSEG Climate Change Resiliency Plan

Irene gave an update on the Case Board comments she is compiling for submission to the New York State Public Service Commission on NYSEG's Climate Change Resiliency Plan. She highlighted the inadequacy of NYSEG's plan and the need for more comprehensive measures. She also provided a synopsis of the recent PSC public hearing, which was well attended by the community with board members providing thoughtful comments. To ensure timely submission, Sara suggested authorizing Irene to submit comments on behalf of CASE.

Action: Sara Culotta made a motion, with a second by Brian Eden, to authorize Irene Weiser, as vice chair, to finalize the comments letter on the NYSEG Climate Change Resiliency Plan, and to submit it jointly with Sara Culotta, as chair, on behalf of the CaSE Board to the NYS Public Service Commission. Motion carried.

8. Discussion: Update on Cooling Centers in the County

Annie Koreman reported on her conversations with County staff, including the director of the Department of Emergency Response regarding the establishment of cooling/warming/charging centers. She shared that the County will be updating its hazard mitigation plan and comprehensive emergency management plan accordingly. These centers will be located in existing community spaces and will be equipped with essential amenities such as heating, air conditioning, and generator backup. The County also plans to reach out to community leaders to identify specific needs and preferences for each area and to communicate information to vulnerable populations ahead of time. Group discussed use of public schools as centers, the need to develop interim solutions before next summer, providing temporary relief from extreme heat through initiatives such as distributing movie theater tickets or offering free meals at air-conditioned venues, and other topics.

9. Discussion: Two Draft Resolutions

Urging Support for DPS 2025 Budget Request for Green Facilities

The group reviewed a draft resolution in support of the 2025 County budget request for green facilities. The discussion covered a variety of topics, including the specific funding allocations for green initiatives, the potential impact on the environment and local economy, and the long-term sustainability of the proposed projects. Attendees discussed potential costs associated with implementing green facilities, as well as the potential challenges in securing necessary permits and approvals. However, they also acknowledged the significant benefits of investing in green infrastructure, such as improved air quality, reduced energy consumption, and increased property values. After a thorough discussion, the group agreed to move forward with the draft resolution and make minor revisions to address the concerns raised.

Action: Sara Culotta made a motion, with a second by Martha Robertson, to approve submitting a resolution urging support for the Tompkins County Facilities Department’s 2025 Budget request for Green Facilities. Motion carried, with Guillermo Metz abstaining.

Urging Support for CaSE to Be Made a Permanent Advisory Board

Martha led the group in a brief discussion on the resolution to make CaSE a permanent County advisory board, highlighting some suggested edits to wording. Sara clarified that the resolution was a draft for the Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality (PEEQ) Committee to review and approve before sending to the full County Legislature. Next steps include advancing the resolution to PEEQ for review, with refinements to be made as necessary. Annie assured members that legislative clerks were available for assistance as needed.

10. Presentation/Discussion: Manufactured Housing Working Group Update

Danielle gave an update on the Manufactured Housing Working Group, which has been meeting for two years and holding listening sessions with partners from around the county. She highlighted the significant challenges facing manufactured home residents in Tompkins County, including energy inefficiency, high housing costs, limited access to affordable financing, health equity, and safety concerns. Some potential solutions include improving energy efficiency through weatherization and renewable energy, increasing affordability by promoting community ownership and advocating for policy changes, and enhancing safety by developing resilience hubs and improving infrastructure. However, limited funding, regulatory barriers, and NIMBYism are significant obstacles. Group discussed the funding challenges and the potential for county or municipal involvement. They also explored strategies for raising awareness and building support for solutions.

11. Discussion: Forming a Working Group to Urge County Support for CLCPA

Brian outlined the development of the NYS Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) and the subsequent opposition from the fossil fuel industry. He highlighted the Climate Action Council's efforts and the challenges posed by the National Fuel Group of Western New York’s misinformation campaign. Members discussed forming a working group to encourage the governor to support the CLCPA, counter misinformation, and collaborate with other organizations to coordinate a statewide response. Danielle, Irene, and Martha volunteered to participate. Members can join at any time.

12. Meeting Wrap-up

Members thanked Danielle for facilitating the meeting.

13. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 5:58pm.