

**TOMPKINS COUNTY Climate and Sustainable Energy Advisory Board
Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2024, 4:00-6:00PM (Via Zoom)**

Final Minutes

Meeting Facilitator: Martha Robertson

Attendance

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

*Non-voting member

Guests: Anne Koreman

1. Call to Order/Agenda Review – Facilitator Martha Robertson called the meeting to order at 4:03pm. No changes to the agenda.

2. Approval of Minutes – The draft Sept. 24, 2024, minutes were approved (motion by Irene Weiser, second by Sara Culotta) as submitted. Motion carried.

3. Public Comment –None

4. Member Updates – Members provided updates on various items of interest. Sara Culotta shared insights from the Cayuga Solar open house, including Cornell's proposed agrivoltaics research lab and potential funding opportunities from the university's Agricultural Experiment Station. Rebecca Evans reported on the expansion of Cornell's urban building energy model to encompass Tompkins County. Brian Eden expressed concerns about ongoing challenges with environmental reviews at the municipal level, particularly regarding Cornell's synthetic turf and mining fieldhouse project. Sarah Schnabel shared information on upcoming electrical code changes and observations from her trip to New Mexico regarding energy usage trends.

5. Chair's Report – Sara's chair report covered several key topics for the Dec. 2 meeting. This in-person meeting will be held at the Tompkins County Public Library, featuring a tour of the Downtown Conference Center and a potluck-style social gathering. Kristin will extend invitations to members of the Environmental Management Council and Water Resources Council. Other topics addressed include ongoing revisions to the board bylaws, the formation of membership and nominating committees, candidate recruitment, and County budget negotiations.

6. Staff Report – No staff report.

7. PEEQ Committee Report – Annie and Veronica addressed questions from board members and provided updates on various topics, including the County Green Building funding proposal, the over target request for the Department of Emergency Response geothermal project, and a suggestion that

the board consider connecting with colleagues on the Environmental Management Council who are interested in exploring issues related to solar farm development. Group also discussed the importance of introducing the new County administrator to the board's work and keeping him informed of relevant climate issues impacting the county.

8. Presentation: The Need for Nuclear Power to Address Climate Change – Ethan Bodnaruk, BlocPower
Ethan presented his perspective on nuclear power, emphasizing its potential safety, efficiency, and low environmental impact. He addressed concerns about nuclear waste, arguing that it is manageable and poses minimal risk. The discussion extended to the potential of nuclear power for data centers and the benefits of small modular reactors. While some participants raised concerns about the costs, complexities, and potential environmental impacts associated with nuclear power, others emphasized its potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ensure energy security. The group also discussed the importance of prioritizing renewable energy development and addressing the challenges of energy storage. Ultimately, the meeting concluded with a consensus that further exploration and discussion are necessary to fully understand the role of nuclear power in a sustainable energy future.

9. Discussion: Draft Bylaws and Membership/Nominating Committees

The group delved into the complex bylaws draft, focusing on two key points: youth representation and staggered board terms. While the idea of mentoring youth representatives was considered, the group decided to postpone this initiative to focus on internal matters. Martha and Sarah volunteered to continue drafting the bylaws, with Kristin's staff support, with members to review at a later meeting. They welcomed additional help from interested members. Sara emphasized the importance of aligning the bylaws with the board's actual operations, suggesting that the mission statement could be broadened to reflect the board's work beyond energy issues.

The conversation then shifted to member recruitment and 2025 officer appointments. The group addressed concerns about attendance and quorum, particularly the challenge of taking timely action between meetings or when quorum is low. Members discussed exploring how other boards address similar issues and potentially incorporating those solutions into the new bylaws. Martha agreed to serve on the Nominating Committee, Irene volunteered to sit on the Membership Committee, and Brian indicated his willingness to contribute to either committee as needed.

10. Report: Update on Working Group to Protect the NY Climate Law

Brian encouraged the group to prioritize a discussion on substantive issues at their January meeting, in order to provide guidance to the County Legislature. This, in turn, would inform and advise County legislators as they interact with their colleagues at the state level. Key issues to be considered include the NY HEAT (New York Home Energy Affordable Transition) Act, Climate Act, grid management, and other related topics.

11. Meeting Wrap-up

Martha thanked everyone for attending and Kristin for her staff support. Sara, in turn, thanked Martha for facilitating.

12. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 6:07pm.