

**TOMPKINS COUNTY Climate and Sustainable Energy Advisory Board
Tuesday, Sept. 24, 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
Jaden Beck	E Rebecca Evans	A Hailley Delisle
Louise Bruce	P Guillermo Metz	P Kristin McCarthy
Sara Culotta	P Martha Robertson	P
Veronica Pillar*	E Sarah Schnabel	P
Brian Eden	P Irene Weiser	P

*Non-voting member

Guests: Peter Bardaglio

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

2. Approval of Minutes – The draft Aug. 27, 2024, minutes were approved (motion by Martha Robertson, second by Sara Culotta) as submitted. Motion carried.

3. Public Comment –Peter Bardaglio shared that Bob Howarth will be presenting his recent work on LNG methane emissions and blue hydrogen at the upcoming TC Climate Protection Initiative meeting.

4. Member Updates – Sara reported to the group from Climate Week in New York City. She attended a workshop on environmental equity with representatives from Microsoft, Amazon, the HBCU Green Fund, and various intermediary organizations and visited Geothermal House to learn about deep geothermal power generation, among other activities. Brian reported on the Climate Superfund Coalition's delivery of signatures to the Governor's office and discussed challenges in implementing the Ithaca Green New Deal. He also highlighted concerns regarding plastic production and the McGraw Hall renovation project at Cornell, while also mentioning his involvement with the Ithaca Planning Board. Irene notified the group about upcoming Public Service Commission comments due on NYSEG and non-pipe alternatives and asked if anyone had been involved in the Lansing school district's geothermal system proposal. Members briefly discussed other climate-related topics, including the potential for investments in Africa to reduce emissions globally and promote social justice, as well as concerns about using such investments as a mechanism for carbon offsets in developed countries. Additionally, the group touched on a document and webinar titled "Teaching False Solutions Jeopardizing New York's Climate."

5. Chair's Report – Notes from Sara:

Sara reported on the board's activities, including their submission of comments to the Public Service Commission on NYSEG's Climate Vulnerabilities Report and Resiliency Study, as well as members' attendance at the Ithaca public hearing. The board then delved into the County budget for green facilities, focusing on the Department of Emergency Response building's HVAC system replacement. As

part of their discussion, they explored potential grant opportunities, such as the Building Cleaner Communities Competition grant, and weighed the cost-effectiveness of geothermal versus traditional HVAC systems. To further offset costs, they plan to research FEMA BRIC funding and will convene a group huddle to prepare for the upcoming budget meeting.

Sara shared that the board is now approved to be a permanent board, requiring two administrative steps. First, the bylaws need to be adjusted to fit a new County bylaws template. Second, members need to apply to be part of the board, submitting new applications for official appointment by the County Legislature. Members are asked to indicate their willingness to serve in 2025 and beyond, with a deadline of December for nominations. A suggestion was made to stagger terms to create a rotating membership and prevent all members from retiring at the same time.

6. Staff Report – Hailley and Terry reported on a GHG emissions survey for employee commutes and the Center of Government building design and its adherence to the Green Building Policy. Group also discussed the state energy plan and nuclear blueprint, parking analysis for the Center of Government building, staffing for sustainability work, and grant funding.

7. Presentation/Discussion: Resilience Hubs Project – Rebecca Morgenstern Brenner and Alistair Hayden, Cornell University

Rebecca and Alistair spoke to the group about resilience hubs, community-serving facilities that support residents and coordinate resources before, during, and after natural disasters. They explained that resilience hubs are built upon existing community facilities and focus on five foundational areas: services and programs, communications, building and landscapes, power, and operations. A community-led approach to development is essential, empowering communities to make informed decisions tailored to their needs. The presenters shared examples of three partner communities: the Southside Community Center, the St. Regis Mohawk tribe, and the Paleontological Research Institute. The project aims to develop a replicable playbook for implementing resilience hubs across New York State, with secured funding to support partner communities. During the Q&A session, discussion highlights included strategies for community engagement, integrating resilience hubs into existing plans, and communicating their importance to residents. Participants also explored challenges and opportunities for implementation, economic benefits, and long-term goals. Next steps include encouraging interested individuals and organizations to reach out for more information and collaboration.

8. Discussion: CaSE Board continued discussion on strategy, shared leadership, and a common framework (as needed)

Members discussed continuing shared facilitation model, now in its second year. The board set the December meeting date for December 2, pending confirmation of the Downtown Conference Center as the venue. It was also proposed that members of the Water Resources Council and Environmental Management Council be invited as well as County legislators. Furthermore, group discussed the idea of the County at some point hosting an advisory board fair to promote networking and recruitment of members.

9. Discussion: Working Group to Protect the NY Climate Law

Brian led discussion on forming a working group to counter the fossil fuel industry's opposition to New York's climate law. The working group would focus on gathering information, developing a strategy, and advocacy. Possible future steps include reaching out to County legislators and other local officials, participating in relevant conferences, and collaborating with other organizations, such as the NYS Association of Counties. In addition, Peter highlighted the need for more action from the Climate Action Council and state officials.

12. Meeting Wrap-up

Martha will lead the October meeting and suggested discussing the pros and cons of nuclear energy. She encouraged members to submit agenda topic ideas.

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