

TOMPKINS COUNTY Climate and Sustainable Energy Advisory Board
Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2024, 4:00-6:00PM
Final Minutes
Meeting Facilitator: Guillermo Metz

Attendance

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

*Non-voting member

Guests: Peter Bardaglio, Fenya Bartram, Dave Bradley, Nora Brown, Shimon Edelman, Kitty Gifford, Sara Hess, Susan Riley, John Monkovic, Marie McCasland, Marie McRae, Gay Nicholson, Bethany Ojalehto Mays, Regi Teasley, Savannah Vega

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

2. Approval of Minutes – The draft Feb. 1, 2024, minutes were approved (motion by Sara Culotta, second by Martha Robertson) as submitted.

3. Public Comment – No guests requested to speak.

4. Member Updates – Jaden Beck discussed plans to revive the Cozy Basement Program with Cornell Cooperative Extension and BlocPower, aiming to engage more participants from low- or moderate-income communities. Additionally, she outlined efforts to advocate for the reinstatement of the NYSEG “Gas Kicker Program,” seeking support from state representatives and the governor’s office. Brian Eden shared NYS legislative updates, highlighting the approval of 14 bills, among them the CO₂ bill, in a 35-minute session of the senate energy and environmental conservation committee. He shared that the Packaging Reduction Act faced opposition over concerns about its swift implementation and other matters. Irene reported on Fracking 2.0, including a presentation to the League of Women Voters later in March, and the ongoing NYSEG gas planning proceeding.

5. Chair’s Report/Board Activity Updates

Sara welcomed Jaden and Louise Bruce as official members of the Case Board and outlined the process of evaluating the board's accomplishments and proposing future actions. Irene elaborated on the evaluation process, suggesting a review of past minutes and potential topics for future focus. Martha Robertson emphasized the importance of ensuring the board's usefulness to the County and discussed the timeline for reauthorization. Brian expressed confidence in the board's engagement with the Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality legislative committee and County Legislature. Sara reminded members to sign up to facilitate future meetings, and Guillermo encouraged anyone interested to contact Jaden about joining the Planning & Evaluation subcommittee.

6. Staff Report

No major updates from staff. Hailley answered questions regarding the induction cooktop program's progress, addressing contractual and storage logistics. Martha inquired about sustainability measures (geothermal in particular) for the new Center of Government, and Hailley confirmed Terry's involvement but noted the absence of a final decision.

7. Presentation/Discussion: Beyond PR: the State and Climate Action at Cornell

Brian Eden provided context for the presentation, emphasizing the importance of understanding Cornell University's history of climate action planning in light of the urgent findings of the New York State Climate Impacts Assessment. He stressed the need for increased commitment from all stakeholders. Presenters Bethany Ojalehto Mays and Shimon Edelman outlined the crucial role of the current decade in addressing climate change and introduced the Cornell on Fire movement. The presenters raised concerns about Cornell's progress towards carbon neutrality by 2035, with delays in key strategies and resistance to updating reporting standards. Discussion focused on emissions reporting standards, carbon inequality, and diverse perspectives on Cornell's emissions, highlighting the need for transparency and comprehensive reporting methods. The presenters concluded with a plea for urgent action from Cornell leadership and increased transparency in emissions reporting. Participants expressed appreciation for the insights shared and discussed potential next steps.

8. Case Resolution for County Resolutions Supporting Various State Legislative Initiatives

Martha Robertson led the discussion, inviting input from Brian, Rebecca, and others, on preparing a resolution encouraging the Tompkins County Legislature to support various NYS legislative initiatives to address climate change. Brian outlined the limited state budget situation, discussing bills aimed at funding climate resilience projects and reducing packaging waste costs for municipalities. Rebecca and others suggested potential additions, such as the P-12 Climate Education bill, emphasizing the importance of comprehensive state support for green initiatives. Martha emphasized the need for timely action given the legislative process's constraints. Veronica Pillar highlighted resolutions passed by the NYS Association of Counties Climate Action Committee, including one addressing solar panel installation barriers and another advocating for continued funding for clean water programs.

Action: Sara Culotta proposed a motion for approval, which was seconded by Irene Weiser, to endorse, in principle, a resolution supporting New York State budget proposals and legislation aimed at addressing climate change. The motion authorized Martha Robertson, Brian Eden, and Rebecca Evans to make necessary edits to the resolution following the meeting. The motion was carried, with the abstention of Guillermo Metz.

8. Meeting Wrap-up

Jaden will email interested parties about participating on the Planning & Evaluation Committee. Sara and Louise will coordinate on the agenda for March.

10. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 6:00pm.