

ENERGY ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

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**Town of Somers**  
WESTCHESTER COUNTY, N.Y.

SOMERS TOWN HOUSE  
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SOMERS, NY 10589

DON BLEASDALE  
JERRY STERN  
CO-CHAIRMAN



**MEETING MINUTES**

**October 4, 2017**

Co-Chairman Jerry Stern called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

The following members were present: Jane Harsha, Jerry Stern, Chris Zaberto, and Marialisa Zywochenko.

Don Bleasdale, Frank Maricic, Stacie Vourakis, and Rick Warren were absent.

Associate members Jason Crawford, Councilman Richard Clinchy, and residents Susanne Cox, as well as Ian Diamond were present.

Somers Open Space Committee members Jan Antonucci and Bob MacGregor joined the meeting as well.

**Minutes** – A motion was made by Mr. Zaberto to approve the minutes of the August 2, 2017 meeting. Mrs. Harsha seconded the motion. All were in favor.

**Somers Open Space Committee Conversation** – In an effort to have synergy between the Somers Energy Environment Committee and the Somers Open Space Committee, members Jan Antonucci and Bob MacGregor were invited to join the meeting. They educated the group about their Committee's role. As they are also Board members of the Somers Land Trust, they spoke about how and why the Somers Land Trust not-for-profit was started, as well as its function. All agreed that both Committees have similar objectives and should collaborate on grants. Earlier today, their group met to discuss possible trail connections, which will encourage community bonding; walking, hiking and biking; and providing recreation, as well as a destination. A list of potential community partners was created as well. The locations are as follows: Somers High School to Muscote Park; trail way at Route 6 to Lincoln Hall; Lincoln Hall to Goldens Bridge; corridor into Goldens Bridge through the Town center thru

Rhinoceros Creek Reservation to the Croton River to Croton Falls; Goldens Bridge railroad station to the Purdys railroad station along the rail bed; Angle Fly Preserve through Somers Manor across the old Plum Brook Bridge through the DEP property to the Goldens Bridge train station; and connections to Katonah, as well as Yorktown Heights.

Councilman Clinchy suggested that arrangements be made to meet with Steve Woelfle and Joe Barbagallo, as well as Tom Chiaverini to discuss this ultimate goal.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Benchmarking – Help with Portfolio Manager Software** – Assistance is needed with inputting information provided by the Finance Department with regard to the electric usage benchmarking requirement. The Hudson Valley Regional Council will provide training that will take about an hour. Individuals can do this from their own computer. Mr. Crawford, Ms. Cox, Mr. Zaberto, and Mrs. Zywochenko offered to help.

**NYSERDA'S Clean Energies Communities GRANT Program Update** – The Committee has not yet heard whether or not they have been chosen as a recipient of NYSERDA'S Clean Energies Communities GRANT Program to add crosswalks on Brick Hill Road, Plum Brook Road and Sunderland Lane. The final proposal was submitted on July 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Clean Energy Community Designation Press Release Update** – A draft of the Clean Energy Community Designation Press Release needs approval by Supervisor Morrissey.

**Sustainable Westchester's Zero Emissions Summit Update** – Mrs. Zywochenko represented the Committee at Sustainable Westchester's Zero Emissions Summit on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September at the Scandinavia House in New York City. A group of people from Finland were present and spoke of their accomplishments in achieving a goal of reducing their carbon footprint. One of the speakers was Westchester resident Joe Carvin founder and CEO of One World and Virtuous. He replicated some programs done in a Finnish school in the Port Chester schools. Mrs. Zywochenko was very impressed and would like to consult with him to do the same in the Somers schools. All agreed. She will reach out to Mr. Carvin.

**Solar Garden Project Update** – Former Committee Chairman Mike Blum had been trying to set up a meeting with the new Director of Somers Manor, Care Rite Centers regarding the possibility of using their property for a Solar Garden to no avail. In addition, he has been waiting for a call back from the CEO of Sebastian Capital, new owners of the former IBM and Pepsico properties regarding the same request.

Resident Ian Diamond joined us this evening. He works in the commercial solar field and explained that the model that works is monetary credits. He has been in communications with Sebastian Capital and is willing to contact them on the

Committee's behalf.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**New Round of NYSERDA Clean Energy Grant** – Applications will be available in 2018. Two new high action items will have to be completed, but as 7 have already been completed, the remaining options are limited. Suggestions include: 1) Climate Smart Communities Pledge and Actions – The Town has to complete several actions from the Climate Smart Communities Certification Action Checklist to reach Bronze level. All were provided a copy of that list. Many are easy to accomplish and assistance is needed from the Committee to do so. 2) Another action could be converting Town owned lights to LED. Although some have already been done, there was some question as to what lights the Town is actually responsible for. Confirmation will be made with the Finance Department. There was also a discussion about converting the ball field lights, which are currently generating the highest electric bills. Mr. Zaberto will do some research.

**Solarize Westchester 2018** – As discussed previously, all agreed not to submit an application for Solarize Westchester 2018.

**Strategy for Re-Engaging the Committee Including Review of 2012 Somers Sustainability Action Plan** – A discussion took place regarding a strategy for re-engaging the Committee including a review of the Somers Sustainability Action Plan (SSAP) which was created in 2012. Some of the action items in the SSAP do require funding. 1 and 3 year Committee plans need to be created. All agreed that the community has to be educated about what the Somers Energy Environment Committee is about. As part of this process, all were asked to review the SSAP and come prepared to speak at the November meeting about two objectives that they think are achievable and meaningful to move forward.

**Meeting with Local Town Energy Groups** – Mr. Bleasdale and Mr. Stern thought perhaps it might make sense to arrange to meet with other local Town energy groups in an effort to share ideas. Bedford has an Energy Advisory Panel; Lewisboro a Sustainability Committee; New Castle a Sustainability Advisory Board; North Salem doesn't have a group; and Yorktown has an Energy Advisory Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m. The next regular monthly meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 1 at 7:00 p.m. at the Recreation Center in Van Tassell Park.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Schirmer, Secretary  
Somers Energy Environment Committee

cc: Energy Environment Committee  
Town Board  
Town Clerk  
Open Space Committee