



The City of Cortland  
Environmental Advisory Committee

October 2, 2023

Wastewater Treatment Facility

The *Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC)* convened at 7 PM Monday October 2<sup>nd</sup> at the *Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF)*. In attendance were Chairman John Busch and members Steve Broyles, Donald and Diane Chu plus city liaison Bruce Adams. Jeremy Jimenez attended over the phone. We also had speakers Dr. Larry Klotz and Ms. Amanda Mazzoni.

1. Call to Order

There was a quorum, and minutes from the August 28<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved. Minutes from the July 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting remain to be approved since there was not a quorum on August 7<sup>th</sup>.

2. Reports

*Vermicomposting Status*

Bruce will request that the DEC extend the May 2024 deadline to file paperwork after the trenches have been built. Even starting now, it is unlikely that contractors could be finished by that time. He is also drafting a resolution asking the Common Council to approve applying for a grant to pay for a third and fourth trench. This resolution will be presented at the October 17<sup>th</sup> Common Council meeting.

*Water Works Forest Stewardship Plan Status*

Donald reported that the *EAC* memo recommending that Matt Swayze be given the go-ahead on his stewardship plan had been passed to the Common Council.

3. Unfinished Business

*New Committee Members*

The mayor has recommended Margaret Jewett for membership on the *EAC*. Her appointment will be voted upon at the October 3<sup>rd</sup> Common Council meeting. Sarah Rosenthal, whom the board also recommended, got a job with Cornell Cooperative Extension in Madison County and may be moving which would disqualify her for membership.

4. New Business

*Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act*

Larry began by reviewing the growing consensus on human-induced climate change and the increased flooding and extinctions. He then moved on to mitigation and the MIT *EN-ROADS Climate Solutions*

*Simulation*<sup>1</sup> which calculates the effectiveness of various strategies to keeping average global temperatures within 1.5 deg C of their pre-industrial era value.

He showed that *EN-ROADS* predicts that increasing the cost of fossil fuels to be the most effective way to limit global warming and offered the proposed *Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (EICDA)* as one way of accomplishing that. It charges fossil fuel companies for production and returns that money equally to all adults with half-shares for each child.

The amount charged to fossil fuel companies would start at \$15 per ton and increase \$10 per ton each year. Initially each adult might get \$600, but after ten years, that amount was predicted to rise to \$3000. The *EICDA* has been around for over a decade, but it is still under consideration. Larry advises Congressman Molinaro's staff on it and other aspects of climate change.

There was discussion about what *EN-ROADS* was actually showing. Shouldn't everyone do what they can right now such as planting trees even if it was not the best solution? Wasn't growth itself rather than climate change the problem? Wouldn't the government use the money for other priorities rather than return it to ordinary people.

Although the current budget turmoil in Washington, DC makes this a bad time to lobby for the *EICDA*, Larry asked that the *EAC* advise the Common Council to issue a resolution in favor of it. Ithaca and several other municipalities have already done so. There was still skepticism among some committee members that this would not become a license to produce more fossil fuels.

#### *NYSERDA CNY Clean Energy Communities*

Amanda Mazzoni of the *CNY Regional Planning and Development Board* then spoke about *NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities (CEC)* incentives for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and conserving energy. In 2010, the city registered as a *CNY* and earned 1200 points and a \$50k grant for LED street lights. Since then, it has not participated.

Although Amanda concentrates more on such municipal projects, she spoke about the *Energy Smart CNY* program and specifically *Empower Plus* which provides up to \$10k grants for low-to-moderate income (<60% of area medium income) households. A first step for the city might be to perform an energy audit, but that is not currently funded under the *CEC* program.

If the city got to 3000 points, *NYSERDA* would pay for a basic *ASHRAE Level 1* audit.<sup>2</sup> Activities that would earn points include campaigning to get residents to:

1. Subscribe to community solar, i.e. agree to accept free electricity from solar generators.
2. Purchase electric or hybrid-electric vehicles.
3. Install heat pumps.

All of these seemed quite doable, and Amanda also offered to help:

1. File the required scoping documents.
2. Find contractor and dealers with whom to partner.
3. Track progress.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.climateinteractive.org/en-roads/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.betterbuildingsbc.ca/faqs/what-are-ashrae-energy-audits/>

The Cortland County Planning Office is also looking to install community solar generators over a closed cell at the landfill, and Amanda offered to connect us with them.

*Clinton Avenue Rain Gardens – Tabled because Jeremy had to leave before we got to the subject.*

## 5. Review Action Items

### Previous Action Items

- ✘ Update and share vermicomposting slides. (Ram Shrivastava)
- ✘ Prepare report on Cortland FOG ordinances. (Steve Broyles)
- ✘ Get Council approval of new vermicomposting grant application. (Bruce Adams)
- ✘ Bring July 3<sup>rd</sup> minutes to October 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting for approval. (Donald Chu)
- ✓ Check with City Clerk about rule for committee membership. (Bruce Adams)
- ✓ Submit memo recommending Water Works Forest Stewardship Plan. (Donald Chu)

### New Action Items

- Discuss endorsing EICDA

## 6. Adjourn

The committee adjourned at 8:42 PM. The next meeting will be 7 PM November 6<sup>th</sup> at the WWTF.