

Geneva Green Committee Meeting Minutes – May 25, 2021

Our meeting was the first in-person meeting we've held for more than a year. We met in the conference room at the NYS Finger Lakes Welcome Center at the city's Lakefront Park

Present: Richard Cox (co-chair), Anne Hoyt (co-chair), Sara Britting, Sarah Meyer (liaison from the Town of Geneva's Sustainability Committee), Jim Norwalk, Pat Wallace, Jan Regan (city council liaison), Jacob Fox, Larry Campbell

Guests: Emily McFadden, Katelyn Ikle, and Jenna Kafrawi from the Geneva High School's Green Club. They reported on their activities which include writing letters and appearing before city council to advocate for composting in the city. They also plan to create a Literacy Garden in an unused courtyard at the high school that will serve as a space to be used for reading.

Guest: Jared Pierce, from Stewards of Natural Environments, who spoke about his group's hope to nurture the community's personal connection with the lake. SONE was started in November of last year on social media. Jared said he'd like to see his group function as a hub that can be used to spread information about the activities of the Green Committee and other similar groups. SONE plans to create a community calendar where different events can be listed. This spring, SONE organized three city-wide trash pickups that brought in close to 1,000 pounds of refuse found around the city in creeks, parks, and other areas. Jared also offered to create graphics for our activities, such as Weeding Wednesdays.

Native Plant Sale – Richard reported on the event which was held May 22, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. outside the Welcome Center. Two vendors, Amanda's Garden and Butterfly Effect had tables while a third, White Oak Nursery, had written materials. Jim reported that he came close to selling out at his table (Butterfly Effect). Richard said the representative from Amanda's Garden also felt the event was a success and asked if one will be held in the fall. Richard noted that the high school Green Club also produced the signs that were used at the sale.

Community Choice Aggregation – Councilor Regan reported on how this initiative is faring with city council which has postponing approving the city's participation. The program, she noted, would designate a default electricity provider for city residents that would guarantee a 10% discount on electricity bills, make the city eligible for up to \$100,000 in grants, and use renewable sources. Numerous communities in the area participate in CCAs, including Honeoye Falls, Canandaigua, Victor, and the Town of Geneva which received \$25,000 in grants that it used to enhance stormwater retention systems. Jan said the primary sticking point for city councilors is the fact that residents must actively opt out if they do not wish to participate. Residents can opt out by mailing a pre-paid postcard, by calling, or by emailing at any time with no penalty and no interruption in service. Jan encouraged supporters of this program to address city council at its June 2 meeting. If the city does choose to join a CCA program, there would be a 60-day informational program to acquaint residents with how the system works. Jan noted that NYSEG supports CCAs since NYSEG is required to provide a certain percentage of electricity from renewable sources.

Waste Assessment Initiative – Sara reported that the contract with Impact Earth has been executed and that three businesses and an apartment building have committed to participating. She said the Lyceum senior citizens apartments and Courtyard Apartments may potentially participate as well. The site selections should be confirmed this week in order for the assessment to take place in mid-June.

Mattress collection – Sara reported that since city council has not approved Closed Loop's Resource Recovery Center on Doran Avenue as a transfer station, the mattress collection can not take place in the city. The state Department of Environmental Conservation will only approve the activity if it occurs at a designated transfer station. Jan asked if it would be possible to do home pick-ups for senior citizens or residents who don't have trucks. Jacob said the Town of Geneva in its mattress collection, did some home pick-ups, but in order for that to happen, the city would need volunteers willing to use their vehicles and carry out the pick-ups.

Lakefront Park initiative – Anne reported that the planting program at the park has been stalled by the issue of water accessibility. The central part of the park has no ready access to water as there are no water outlets there. In addition, the park should be weeded before new plants are installed. She reported that a Weeding Wednesday event has been ongoing for the last two weeks. A group of volunteer weeders meet at the Welcome Center on Wednesday mornings at 8 a.m. and work until 10, weeding beds.

Joint Meeting with the Town of Geneva Sustainability Committee – Richard asked that members email their availability for a June meeting with the town committee. Jacob said that J.J. Nicholson will give a presentation on his concept for Castle Creek environmental center and possibility of daylighting sections of the creek. Sara suggested that Larry Campbell and Darren Magee present on practical suggestions they might make to reduce the city's trash footprint.

Bike racks and recycling – Pat noted that the city has only one bike rack at the lakefront park and no recycling bins except inside the Welcome Center.