

Special Planning Meeting of the City of Geneva, NY, Green Committee

2023 Sept 24, Finger Lakes Welcome Center, 2:00-4:00pm

Present: Richard Cox (Co-Chair), Anne Hoyt (Co-Chair), Jan Regan (City Council Liaison), Larry Campbell, Jim Norwalk, Marcia Cullen, Pat Wallace

This meeting was to plan the priorities for the coming year.

JN: the Zotos wind turbines' excess electricity was supposed to go to the City. RC: Ken Camera would know. JR: will ask him. LC: they don't always operate because some of the fixtures didn't work correctly and there was a problem connecting to the grid. PW: John Halfman (Geo Dept Prof) said that NYSEG set a maximum amount of electricity that they are allowed to generate; will ask him for more details. LC: all the electricity stays at and is used by Zotos. PW followed-up with JH, and Environmental Studies Profs Tom Drennin and Darrin Magee: the turbines were built for Zotos' use after which any electricity left over would be credited to Geneva until the maximum generation amount set by NYSEG is reached. At that point, the turbines are stopped. During the building phase, some approval steps were skipped, resulting in trouble with NYSEG and NYS. The turbines were erected too close to power lines, which had to be moved. The grid's capacity could be overloaded if both 1.5megaWatt turbines turn at the same time, so one is normally dormant. NYSEG also controls when they operate, based on supply and demand. Zotos seems to be permanently closed, but the turbines are still there. When the turbines are not spinning it's for one of three reasons:

1. Too little wind: All turbines have a cut-in speed, under which they don't work.
2. Too much wind: In high winds, they mechanically brake the turbine shaft and feather the blades to keep them from overspinning.
3. Not enough "room" on the grid: This is when NYSEG decides there are too many intermittent (solar and wind) power sources running at any one time on the grid and restricts some of them. Electricity supply and demand have to be very closely matched all the time on the grid or else you get voltage or frequency changes that cause brownouts and blackouts (very expensive) so most grid operators limit the percentage of intermittent (renewable) power on the grid at any moment. Smarter grid infrastructure (also very expensive, but necessary) can fix this by allowing near-instantaneous communication among different generators and users on the grid, so that if there's an unexpected drop in power due to clouds or a drop in wind, then other generators (hydro, fast gas generators) can ramp up quickly to fill the void.

JR: will ask DPW about collecting leaves/yard debris from residents' curbs more efficiently. Currently, yard debris sits at the curb for months at a time, killing people's grass and/or being blown into the street by the wind, clogging up the storm sewars (exacerbating flooding). Leaves put to the curb are supposed to be in paper bags, not loose.

JN: will talk to Jacob Fox (now a City employee) regarding City codes having to do with Green issues and have JF interface with the City Council on them.

JN: going on record as being upset about City workers destroying new and expensive plantings in the Routes 5&20 median. The plantings haven't been properly weeded or maintained. AH: Joe Venuti said that he did not authorize their removal. What should go there instead? JR: a statue?

PW: I want to support RC's climate change book discussion group, Sara Britting's fight against plastic clam shell use at Wegmans, AH's Weeding Wednesdays, JF's energy audits, neighbor notification of pesticide use, Mission Zero, and the HWS Green Lens Film Series that Alejandra Molina and I organize. I had a home energy audit last October by Simply Home Performance, but they didn't do the whole house seal test, and didn't come through

with the things they offered to provide (LED bulbs, dehumidifier, etc.). They were at MZ, too. RC: I'll talk to the owner.

RC: there's a radio ad for Saturday's Native Plant Sale. JR: Ted Baker, WGBA radio, disseminates good local info.

MC: we should start planning for Mission Zero earlier this year than last year. All agree.

RC: I've already set the date (Saturday, April 27th) and lined up the same location (ice rink), and the Shade Tree Committee agreed to again do their sapling give-away there. JR and I spoke to Mark Gearan (HWS Pres.) suggesting that they emulate NJ K-8 cross-discipline integration of climate change instruction in all courses. We should get NYS to adopt a similar program. We should write about the dump situation. Suzie (at the public library) said that it's too late to get the new climate change book club into the Oct newsletter, so we should do something with a shorter format for the fall and do the book in the winter. I talked to Jamie Makinster, ESSYI Director, about getting a professor to be the guest expert for each section of the book. It focusses on positive actions to combat despair. MC: what about reading the GND? PW: yes, and discuss how it could be applied to Geneva. MC: and there's a new book, The Blue New Deal, highlighted on NPR's Science Friday (about how the oceans play a role and could be used to better mitigate climate change).

AH: the Doran Ave problem needs to be addressed. The City could run it. JR: JF has ideas for a clothing drop box, display cases; Amie Hendrix decreased the operator's contract to 1 yr. AH: we should revisit how to make it viable, brainstorm with the group and JF. JF is focused on stormwater diversion. If a parking lot (e.g, the Town & Country Plaza) should ever need to be totally replaced (as opposed to patched), it's supposed to be made permeable. We could offer input to the Planning Board or whoever issues such permits.

JR: I liked approaching Mark Gearan, but we should focus on public school kids for climate change curriculum.

AH: Composting should be promoted in the public schools. I would like to see that video that RC has of Jenna Fuchs working with the pre-school kids. The finished compost could be used locally. RC: the high school Green Club wants to set up a compost collection system in their cafeteria, but they'll have to station a Green Club member there to direct the students as they discard stuff. PW: it should be an adult so that peers aren't victimized by bullies. RC: 3rd Act could assist. The HS students tried to get this started, but the idea was shot down, and then covid hit.

RC: HeatSmart Climate Solutions Accelerator is linked to the Town and City. We need people to agree to conduct home energy audits to both qualify the City for grant money and to save greenhouse gas emissions and residents' money. For MZ we should get an IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) expert to talk to attendees.

JF via email: get a handle on urban stormwater with a holistic approach:

- improve yard waste pickup
- stream bank stabilization plantings
- encourage rain gardens through zoning changes
- address key pollution areas and reinforce with installments of absorbent media and debris catchment
- clean out blocked pipes
- construct upland retention ponds outside the city in the watershed

AH: looking through the City Code is time-sensitive because council may pass (a resolution?) on it.

LC: the flooding on Jefferson St needs to be addressed.

AH: we should start MZ planning before New Year's. RC: the tables that we borrowed from the Presbyterian Church last year have been given away; can ask where they went. Should we charge on the same scale (\$250/\$50/\$0)?

RC: get JR to have someone go over the Comprehensive Plan to support our goals.

PW: MC suggested that (after being reviewed for accuracy) the minutes be emailed to GGC members as well as being posted online. Nicole has already posted August's and September's meeting minutes to the website, along with the link to the Greener Geneva Facebook page.

MC: Katherine Price of BID gave the Wednesday Weeders a thank-you get-together at the Linden.

AH: marina expert said that the wood suggested for use is endangered, but he found a sustainable alternative, said to keep the elbow because soft edges dissipate storm surge energy, and suggested that the marina project be downsized. The City could run it.

RC: I attended two climate rallies. I tabled for Rochester's 3rd Act event which drew ~300 people, mostly youths and retired folks, few in between (but it was a workday), and caught the bus from Ithaca to NYC's Climate March last Sunday attended by ~75,000 people.