



Minutes – Friday, July 28, 2023
Video Conference
9 am to 11 am

Attending: Siobhan Hull, Aaron Fernando, Agnes Emilio, Anne Rhodes, Caitlin Cameron, Chuck Geisler, David Kay, Guillermo Metz, Hailley Delisle, Ingrid Zabel, Isia Patie, Jack Wright, Jaden Beck, Janelle Bourgeois, Jon Jensen, Leigh Miller, Luka, Marie McRae, Nick Goldsmith, Paul Moore, Ray Burger, Rebecca Evans, Susan Riley, Tom Hirasuna, Yayoi Koizumi, Sarah Carson, Holly Hutchinson, Lisa Marshall, Luis Aguirre-Torres, Jerry Sheng, Peter Bardaglio

Sunrise Movement Ithaca – Siobhan Hull and Isia Patie

Siobhan Hull and Isia Patie updated the group about Sunrise Ithaca's recent activities and plans for the coming year. Siobhan is the Ithaca Hub coordinator and Isia is a rising senior at Ithaca High School.

- Siobhan presented overview of organization and its history, how it operates at national level, and what ongoing work entails
- Sunrise Ithaca formed around push to get Ithaca Green New Deal passed by Common Council
- Held rallies and town halls and delivered public comments during Common Council meetings
- Ithaca Green New Deal (IGND) adopted in June 2019 following Sunrise Ithaca's actions
- IGND established two main goals:
 - Reach carbon neutrality by 2030
 - Do so in a manner that shares benefits among all local communities in away that reduces social, historic, and economic inequalities
- Latter goal has been focus of Sunrise Ithaca's work following passage of IGND
- Subsequent work:
 - Comments on Ithaca Energy Code Supplement
 - Campaigned for Solidarity Slate in city election
 - Pushed city to declare "climate emergency" – called for 24/7 carbon-free energy, tenant protections, forums for community input such as City Sustainability and Climate Justice Commission
 - Strengthened relationships with community organizations such as TCCPI
 - Held educational events such as webinar on Indigenous sovereignty and climate justice
 - Provided support for statewide campaigns such as NY Renews Climate, Jobs, and Justice package
 - Mobilized rallies calling for equitable implementation of IGND
- Isia provided overview of what is happening at national level
- Primary focus on getting Biden administration to declare climate emergency and address climate crisis using executive authority
- Why?
 - Unlock millions for climate disaster relief
 - Allocate funds to renewable energy investments, resilient public housing, and transit
 - Combat public health crisis emerging from climate crisis
 - Create millions of new, good paying unions job to fight climate crisis
- Sign the petition: smvmt.link/declare
- Current Sunrise national demands
 - End practice of leasing public lands and waters for fossil fuel production
 - Stop issuing permits for any new fossil fuel infrastructure
 - Update and strengthen outdated standards limiting particulate matter, ozone, carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, mercury, coal ash, and tailpipe emissions, as well as lead and copper rules preventing contamination of drinking water
 - Finalize new methane standards for new and existing oil and gas operations

- Direct EPA to designate greenhouse pollutants as criteria air pollutants and set a science-based national pollution cap under Clean Air Act
- Sunrise 2.0 establishes new democratic structure to strengthen empowerment of local hubs and secure greater public support
- Establishes delegate body with proportional representation: one representative per hub and two per chapter, organized by region
- Delegates meet to discuss and vote on decisions as needed
- Volunteer leadership team meets frequently to discuss and decide with staff support – higher commitment, compensated role – working to put more diverse team together than in past
- National call for implementation of federal Green New Deal policies: “Build people power, disrupt the status quo, and achieve local wins that set us up to win national Green New Deal policies that meet the scale of the crisis we face”
- Focus of Sunrise Ithaca hub going forward:
 - Justice50 implementation
 - Climate Action Plan for City
 - Public Outreach/Engagement
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 - Door-to-door canvassing
 - Hear concerns and needs of residents
 - Disseminate transparent information on current status of IGND
 - Outreach to CJC communities
- Survey and data collection
 - Numbers as a tool to convey our demands to the local government
 - Community Input Survey <https://tr.ee/wGQzLDDYDO>
- Green New Deal for Schools
 - Schools can be birthplace of change
 - Establishing climate justice and action within schools:
 - Free, healthy meals, climate curriculum, building sustainable infrastructures
 - At college/university level: divest endowment from fossil fuels, invest in local community (i.e. Cornell PILOT)
 - In Ithaca
 - Getting Cornell to pay for TCAT
 - ICSD GND (Sunrise LACS)
- Siobhan outlined ways people could support Sunrise Ithaca
 - Make public comments advocating for the implementation of Justice50 at Common Council and Sustainability and Climate Justice Advisory Commission meetings
 - Incorporate equity as a key pillar of your campaigns and general efforts
 - Attend events when we host them!

Q&A

- Peter noted that national Sunrise Movement held gathering earlier in week in Washington, DC focused on labor – how is local hub working on this issue?
- Siobhan: Provided support to Starbucks workers in Ithaca when they went on strike – hope to reach out more in future to local labor unions, especially regarding declaration of climate emergency
- Peter: Are there Sunrise Ithaca members on the City Sustainability and Climate Justice Commission?
- Siobhan will be serving on commission – a few other openings so maybe others will also serve on commission
- Peter asked Rebecca Evans about her perspective on Sunrise Ithaca given her early involvement with its founding
- Rebecca: COVID crisis made it difficult for Sunrise Ithaca to engage in critical relationship building needed for strong activist group – nice to see students still working on moving Sunrise Ithaca forward
- Peter asked Rebecca to provide brief overview of Sustainability and Climate Justice Commission and how it’s progressing
- Rebecca: Mayor will be appointing two new members at August Common Council meeting, Siobhan and Aaron Fernando – getting more young people and renters on commission very important
- Nick Goldsmith is hoping to join with Park Foundation approval – should be full commission in August – David Kay is chair

- David: Great news that we'll have full commission in August – commission has big agenda – have had a couple of meetings with members already appointed – looking forward to meeting as full commission
- Commission has two main responsibilities under city law
 - Serve as technical advisory group to city based on our areas of expertise, providing feedback
 - Provide connection between government and people who will be affected by policies put in place
- Rebecca: Lot of different areas of expertise on commission – still lot of education needed to bring all members up to speed – already received very helpful guidance and feedback from commission
- Jaden Beck: Second function of advisory group – reaching out to community – crucial appreciates Sunrise Ithaca's focus on community outreach
- Peter: To what extent are ICSD students pushing administration, especially at high school, to take more significant steps than they have already to install solar power?
- Isia: IC and Cornell have lot more funding to support solar development
- Sarah Carson: Anyone trying to move in this direction finds out quickly that it's not easy – takes lot of persistence
- Need time to develop understanding of what options are available – need to follow state procurement rules as public school system – adds another layer of challenges
- Peter wondered whether incentives in Inflation Reduction Act might make more progress possible
- Sarah: Might be good if there was K-12 representation on NYSERDA's Green NY Council, charged with figuring out how state agencies are going to comply with state order to use 100% renewables by 2025, among other things
- David: Anyone who moves back and forth between activist, outsider arena and insider effort to bring about institutional change soon understands challenges of doing so – most important factor in creating change is extent to which outside pressure demands system change – requires both supporting and pushing
- School districts need to be part of change if state is going to achieve its climate goals – school systems need to be paying more attention than they are
- Peter: Would send important message to students if Ithaca High School at least installed PV system on its roof – students need to feel that they have some sort of concrete connection to energy transition
- David: Very impressed with Sunrise Ithaca presentation and work they are doing – already a lot to take on, never mind adding solar issue on top of it
- Peter agreed and noted that the other new area of focus, based on presentation, sounds like greater coordination between local hubs and national leadership
- Peter asked Siobhan and Isia how they carry out recruitment – through social media, showing up at meetings of other organizations, etc.?
- Siobhan: Recruitment during COVID quite challenging – a lot of new recruitment has come out of IHS and LACS – Siobhan also hoping to do more recruiting among college students
- Isia: We do reach out to other organizations and table at related events
- Sarah put in quick plug for youth component of upcoming NYSACC conference this fall – great opportunity for young people to connect with environmental and climate activities

Zero Waste Ithaca – Yayoi Koizumi

Yayoi Koizumi, founder of Zero Waste Ithaca, discussed the group's goals and priorities, as well as recent work on PFAS, sewage sludge, and plastic pollution, among other issues.

- Zero Waste Ithaca (ZWI) grassroots organization started in 2018
- Upcoming events: <https://zerowasteithaca.substack.com/zerowasteithaca.org>
- ZWI urging county legislature to adopt three measures
 - Pass Skip the Stuff Law – will require businesses to provide single-use items like utensils and condiment packages only when requested by customer
 - Ban Artificial Turf – will limit dissemination of PFAS and plastic pollution
 - Ban Land Application of Sewage Sludge and Its Export -- safeguard soil, water, and overall public health
- Mission: promotion of zero waste policy and culture
- Two-prong approach: Policy advocacy at local and state level on one hand, and everyday zero waste practice on other

- We believe everyday practice is vital for bringing the community together – zero waste practice highly social activity – great way to connect people
- Zero Waste International Alliance: “Zero waste is conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten environment or human health”
- Bring Your Own Container flagship program of ZWI – recruit businesses to participate – also utensils by request only
- Table at events to raise awareness – also good coverage from local media – part of national BYO support network (USReduces.org)
- BYO movement also prominent in Canada and Australia – working to change state and federal laws in U.S. to support practice
- ZWI carried out study of move-out dumpsters on Cornell campus last year – tremendous waste issue that needs to be addressed – more effective messaging needs to be adopted by university – compiling another report this year
- ZWI has campaigned against installation of artificial turf at IC’s football stadium – Cornell has also installed artificial turf on multiple fields
- Another campaign seeking state ban on use of sewage sludge for compost, soil amendment, and fertilizer due to PFAS contamination
- Why BYO? Why Reuse?
 - Only about 5% of plastics are being recycled
 - Both plastics and bioplastics are toxic
 - Plastic is in our body: in placenta, venous tissues, lungs, and intestines
 - We eat more than one credit card size of plastic per week (2019 Australian study)
 - Plastics are in our air, water, soil, and foods (even vegetables!)
 - Plastics are killing wildlife
 - Plastic particles found in the remotest corner of planet, such as the Arctic and Grand Canyon
 - Plastic production is extremely polluting and a major source of emissions from extraction to incineration at the end of life
 - Plastics and solid waste affect climate justice communities around the world
 - Waste colonialism: Plastic wastes from rich countries are shipped and smuggled into poor countries

Renewable Heat Now – Lisa Marshall

Lisa Marshall is the advocacy and organizing director of New Yorkers for Clean Power and a key leader in the statewide Renewable Heat Now (RHN) campaign. Lisa provided a preview of RHN’s fall plans.

- Renewable Heat Now statewide campaign focused on renewable heating and cooling and energy efficiency policy education and implementation
- Began campaign six years ago – not single organization but rather many organizations joined together
- Pushed PSC to provide significant incentives for heat pump installations – shifted in past two years to focus on legislation
- All Electric Building Act key victory in last legislative session as well as Advanced Building Codes and Standards Act year before – also part of group that successfully advocated for thermal energy network bill
- NY HEAT Act is our cornerstone legislative effort – will end ratepayer subsidies for utility gas system and instead invest in renewable heating and cooling solutions that will help us meet state climate act targets
- Also has energy affordability component for lower income households
- Organizational sign-on letter calling on Gov. Hochul to support bill – also has digital postcard that individuals can sign on to: <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/governor-hochul-put-ny-heat-in-the-budget>
- Also planning on series of local events in fall, Renewable Heat Now Roadtrip – there will be one in Tompkins County in October
- Involves teach-in on NY HEAT Act, shared meal together, and distribution of stickers and buttons for campaign
- Part of mobilizing people for large rally in NYC in early December and rally and lobby day in Albany in January

- Need to push governor hard – will be uphill battle
- Mothers Out Front sponsoring event in Tompkins County – welcome support from other organizations such as TCCPI

Q&A

- Peter: TCCPI happy to be co-sponsor – also will be participating in other advocacy efforts this fall, helping to lobby, send letters, and outreach on social media
- Lisa: Appreciate support and really proud of our campaign and how effective it's been – building section of final climate plan one of its strongest sections – due in part to years of work on renewable heating and cooling
- Tompkins County organizations and activists instrumental in helping to make this happen
- Buildings are hard – we need our policies to align with our goals, and right now they don't
- Really gratifying to have such great people involved in campaign and to help bring about meaningful change at state level
- Millions of dollars being spent by gas utilities and industry lobbyists in effort to defeat our campaign
- Yayoi asked Lisa to explain 100-foot rule
- NY utility law states utilities have obligation to serve all customers within their territories – when customer asks to be hooked up, utility has to say yes
- Original intent positive – put in place to make sure utilities couldn't redline or discriminate against low-income neighborhoods
- If customer makes request and is within 100 feet of existing gas line, ratepayers cover cost of installation
- In other words, ratepayers obligated to cover cost of gas expansion in NY – NY HEAT Act will amend utility law to end 100-foot rule
- NY HEAT Act passed state senate last year – now have about 66 General Assembly co-sponsors
- Need to reach governor earlier this year – came very close to passing last session