

2024 May 21 City of Geneva, NY Green Committee Monthly Meeting Minutes

5:30-7:00, Welcome Center Conference Room

Present: Richard Cox (Co-Chair), Anne Hoyt (Co-Chair), Jan Regan, James Anderson, Julie Coleman, Jason Rearick, Larry Campbell, Marcia Cullen, Pat Keef, Sara Britting, Pat Wallace

Anne's report from the latest Council meeting plus interaction with Joe Venuti and Amie Hendrix about status of work at Park and downtown street gardens: Catherine Price & I talked about solutions for the Lakefront Park, which does not seem to be a high priority for the City Council. At their next meeting, there will be a motion before Council to change the City Code to allow for rain gardens in front yards (but the code still doesn't allow for vegetable gardens in front yards). DPW is happy to finance Jill Byington (of BID) to work at the Lakefront as opposed to doing the work themselves. Jill thinks that she can get the Lakefront Park under control in one year with native shrubs and grasses, but PW just noticed that there's a large infestation of horsetail (*Equisetum*) growing on the north side of the front door).

Jan's report on the progress of the ReUse Committee: "Geneva ReUse Systems, Inc." was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) 5/15/24. It has several working committees, one of which is focused on securing a physical location. We want to start with one storefront/warehouse, but hope to have multiple locations in time, accommodating a Fix-It Clinic, etc. Diane Cohen (of the Finger Lakes ReUse Center in Ithaca) is leading us and lending her expertise. We're temporarily under the auspices of the Geneva Community Projects Outreach Committee and developing a hand-out information card. The location we're trying to secure is the old Tops store, which has rooms which could be used for seminars, employee training, storefront space, storage space, and parking. We want to own, not rent, which would help secure grant money. Other possible locations would be the old Red Jacket store and the old American Can site (near Cracker Factory). It's a joint venture between the Town of Geneva and the City of Geneva, so we hope to get a location in each. The Center of Concern is worried about the ReUse store compromising their mission, but they met with Diane Cohen who assured them from her experience in Ithaca that there's room for both to exist and work cooperatively together and be mutually supportive, not competitive. The Center of Concern has a food pantry which the ReUse Center doesn't, and ReUse would have a Fix-It clinic; the Center of Concern doesn't deal in furniture, broken items, or items salvaged from construction and demolition. ReUse would train people for permanent, fair-wage jobs, and has a much-needed mission to keep stuff out of landfills.

RC Plant Sale report: very successful. White Oak Nurseries, Amanda's Garden, and Butterfly Effect all sold most of their plants and were very pleased about that. The only snafu was that we expected to be inside and didn't find out until we arrived that we were not being allowed to set up inside. We like being near the gazebo but hadn't brought canopies and it did rain, getting paperwork wet.

PW wanted guidance on how to respond to the strange MZ feedback from CCE, which RC read out to the group. Group suggests asking clarifying questions. We advertised on

2 radio stations, FLT, 10 Facebook groups and websites, posters, and have told MZ3's vendors the date for MZ4. JC: send/re-send Save-the-Date invitations in Sept, start advertising 6-8 weeks before the event. Jason & JC: switch the registration form from emailed PDF to online: Google Forms, Mailchimp, QR code, etc. & branch out to additional platforms. RC: we thought that we had someone for other platforms, but they didn't come through.

JC: there are a lot of siloed groups in Geneva with overlapping interests but each with its own different focus.

AH: we could be a "clearing house" for all these committees. Collaboration would help to further all of our interests.

RC to JC: Please compile a list of these groups, their contact info, and their foci.

Jan: last year before I left Council, we passed a Resolution to study the Geneva Resource Recovery Park on Doran Ave.... Jacob Fox....

LC: GGC used to have a liaison with the major organizations around Geneva (hospital, schools, Experiment Station, etc.) Elaine Espensheid wrote the original....6-page document asking the Mayor to sign a pledge of Sustainability practices but it included incineration.... Climate Smart Communities ~10 years ago.... Mayor Pinky wanted to put the incinerator on the lakefront. I did an energy audit for Geneva and recommended to change streetlights from incandescent to LED, focus light downward. It was adopted because LED's saved Geneva enough money to make it worthwhile.

RC: Report on Castle Creek Madia's site project: David West is very busy and unable to join our meeting but suggests Jacob Fox (Sustainability Officer for Town of Geneva and City of Geneva) as the conduit for the Climate Smart Solutions. DW via email: "I can also provide an update on Madia's, the proposal is to daylight the area currently under the building, but not to cross the parking lot. I attended a great daylighting project tour last week at a conference and hope some of those lessons can be applied in future projects."

JC: what's our role in ClimateSmart?

LC: JF earns us points for implementing initiatives, which opens up more grant money.

JC: a grant-writer could parley that to more grant funding.

JC wants to re-vamp the Green Committee's page on the City website (as PW has been suggesting). JC: Erica ____, Marketing Director....

General agreement that the GGC page on the City website needs updating.

"Membership" can be broken into 2 groups: active members to be given full reports and

"Friends of the GGC" to be given a shorter infographic highlights newsletter.

AH: we can send a press release to churches and other groups that we'll be starting this.

JC: we can include Local Green Events, Ontario County green events....

Action items: letter-writing to Council and City Manager: A couple of members (including PW) wrote emails to City Councilors, Mayor, City Manager regarding the GRRP and/or Lakefront Park, but received no acknowledgement. Others are encouraged to write to show that many people care about this. See attached contact info (because the City website is out of date) and the final report of the joint Town and City of Geneva Materials Management Working Group, which was submitted to both Town and City Governments Nov 2022: <<https://hws.box.com/s/u2wcni2g7kjnel67yo1v9w3evfwczjs>>

RC gave a report of the GGC funds: MZ3 income of \$520, expenses of \$36.97, leaving a balance of \$1397.08. (Note: there's also an invoice of \$300 to be paid for the Rain barrel workshop.)

AH: what were the main draws of MZ?

RC: the rain barrel workshop had 12 signed up ahead of time, and 27 participants, plus the sapling give-away. The compost bins which JF got were a crowd-pleaser, but no one knew about them ahead of time.

AH: I want to connect with JF and have him come to our GGC meeting(s). He needs a truck, wants to collect recyclables, what does micro-hauler license cover?

Nardozzis/Closed Loop had the truck and micro-hauler license.

PW: how long is the license good for?

JC: one year. the GRRP has a permanent license which doesn't need renewal.

RC: John Hicks said that for the worm trenches to pay for themselves (via the sale of worms and compost), there should be 4 of them.

JC: there was a grant to pay for 2 of them, but the City didn't want to pay for the other 2. Closed Loop micro-hauler started with organics, furniture, etc. private enterprise as opposed to municipal.

AH: JF contacted schools, HWS (which had been sending their organic waste to Trumansburg), Seneca Falls....

JC: other collectors of organics are Impact Earth (which sends theirs to John Hicks' Organix), Vermigreen (which gets organics from Wegmans), and Finger Lakes Compost.

AH: we should invite JF to get this back on track, and we can make it the first agenda item for next month's meeting.

RC nominated Sara Britting to be treasurer. SB accepted the nomination, all approved, no objections.

RC asked Jackie Augustine to give a presentation to us of the Comprehensive Plan. Would Wednesday 5/29/24 work?

Announcements:

AH: Emily DeBolt, new Director of Seneca Lakes Pure Waters, will be giving a workshop 5/28/24 5:30-7:00 at the Geneva Public Library to educate people on native plants for rain gardens.

JC: the Community Garden plots at 50 State Street are back in “business” at no charge to users. The land is owned by Children’s Hours School, Jeff Henderson organizes the Peeps coop, and BluePrint stocks the little Free Farm Stand. There’s also a Sensory Garden. JC and husband Michael Coleman mowed and weed-wacked around the raised beds. Now the beds (and Sensory Garden) need to be weeded. Anyone can claim a plot – just weed it and mark it as yours.

AH: Sunday June 2nd is the Town’s spring Free Stuff Day. Items are dropped off 10:00-12:00 and taken for free from 12:00-2:00 to keep things out of the landfills.

RC: can we schedule an “organizational” meeting next week? (Will Wednesday 5/29/24 work?)