

Canaan Climate Smart Task Force Meeting
July 22nd, 2025 – 7PM

In attendance

Task Force Members:

- Victoria Mills
- Tom Potter
- Mark Harbick
- Nick Adams

Outside Contributors:

- Brenda Adams (Town Supervisor)

Approval of June meeting minutes

Mark motion to approve, Victoria seconds

Appreciations for Silver Certification application

- Big deal! Over a year of work done and documented, with a HUGE push at the finish.
- Enormous thanks to Victoria and Elyse for orchestrating such a lift. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Important Acronyms

- CEC: [Clean Energy Communities](#) Program (New York State/[NYSERDA](#))
- CSC: [Climate Smart Communities](#) Program (New York State)
- CLC – [Columbia Land Conservancy](#) (private non-profit conservation group)
- CAC – [Conservation Advisory Council](#) (established by municipalities)

Discussion: What's next for the Climate Smart Task Force?

What do you think we should focus on?

- Brenda understands from Dylan Cipkowski that the permit to remove invasive species will (hopefully) be granted by August.
- Highway Superintendent and Town Supervisor are working with Trout Unlimited to get a grant to replace culvert at North Valley Road, which has seen chronic flooding. Grant application is due by July 31st
 - Replacing culverts is very expensive, so it's important to get a grant

- Proximity to wetland means work is environmentally sensitive
- Lindsey from Cornell reached out about heat emergency plan.
 - Task Force could investigate this to see if this would be worth exploring
- County Hazard Mitigation Plan is awaiting approval.
 - Each town has an appendix within the county plan (also earns CSC points)
 - Work for the town is complete, just waiting for the overall plan to be approved
- Idea for a local alert system. Representatives around the town that are responsible for overseeing their roads/parts of town in the event of an emergency. This would help emergency personnel prioritize resources.
- [Go for Gold?](#) CSC website says “The gold level is currently under development as part of an initiative to align the highest level of CSC certification with New York State's greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction limits and climate adaptation goals.”
- Eva Hoskin from NYSERDA is offering technical assistance as part of Clean Energy Communities (CEC) program. We should take advantage of this.
- There's a lot this task force could do to improve climate communication locally.
 - Update climate info on town website (site will be redesigned by end of year)
 - Add regular update from CSTF in Brenda's newsletter
 - Organize community learning sessions
 - Integrate climate considerations into comprehensive plan
- Land conservation: Canaan has a low percentage of overall land conserved. What more could we be doing?
 - Columbia Land Conservancy's new strategic plan will help town identify important lands to conserve
 - [Highland conservation communities](#) (2022, Fed program US Fish and Wildlife). Town has to opt-in, which allows the town to apply for grant money that would fund the purchase of local attractions. Provides a 1:1 grant.
 - Community Preservation Fund – a local entity that can provide the other 50% of the funding
 - This earns points under PE7 – Conserve Natural Areas (open space plans)
- Invasive species education sessions
 - Organize events where outside experts come in and give information sessions to residents on how to manage and remove invasive species
 - There could be further related sessions involving animals, local history (applicable as it builds a desire for conservation), climate preparedness, etc.
- Town invasive species removal
 - In addition to the Stoddard Pond, there could be invasive species removal events in the town park. Serves an environmental, educational, and practical purpose.

- Restoration of native species on town lands, town could set an example for residents and other municipalities on environmentally sound methods of land management
- Going forward, each task force member will have a domain
 - Each of us has an area of expertise and works on it independently, updating the group at monthly meetings and getting input and help as needed
 - This will accelerate progress and increase our impact as a group.
- Stoddard Park master plan
 - This could tie into invasive species removal and native restoration
 - Layout submissions from public could use local human capital to offset large expenditures
- We should be monitoring what other climate-related grants are available to our community
 - What is the next solar and heat pump project?
 - Who can we consult about this?
 - Identify infrastructure that needs improvement
- Go through all these plans (CARP, Emergency Mgmt Plan, etc.) and identify high-priority actions we have not yet implemented

What resources exist (or are being developed) to inform our work?

- [Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan](#) (completed 2024)
- [Natural Resource Inventory](#) (completed 2023)
- Climate-Smart Communities [Certification Actions](#) and [tracking spreadsheet](#)
- County-wide Hazard Mitigation Plan with Canaan appendix (in development)
- Canaan Comprehensive Plan 2025 (in development)
- Columbia Land Conservancy strategic plan (in development)
- Canaan Strategic Plan 2002 (historic)

Next steps

- By **COB Wednesday, July 30th**, review other towns' websites and send Christine Wemple cwemple@canaannewyork.org three towns whose websites you like and three you don't (including why). This will inform our website overhaul.
- Homework for next meeting:
 - Read the CARP, Natural Resource Inventory, CSC Certification Actions and draft Hazard Mitigation Plan.

- Get familiar with what we have already accomplished (CSC tracking spreadsheet and [CSTF web page](#) is a good source).
- Think about what initiatives you want to champion on the Task Force, and what we should try to accomplish in the next 6-12 months. This will help us develop goals and a plan for our work for the rest of this year and into 2026.

Upcoming events

August 2nd, 10-noon: Canaan Comprehensive Plan event

Next meeting: Tuesday, August 19th at 7pm

Victoria motion to adjourn at 8:22 pm