

Summary of the Public Hearing on the Draft Community Energy Program Plan
Held in the Court Room, Audubon Municipal Hall
On January 3, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

A public hearing on the draft Community Energy Program Plan (CEPP) was advertised in The Retrospect, a local newspaper, as well as on social media and via email. There will be a second public hearing on the CEPP held at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 16 in the Court Room at the Audubon Municipal Building.

This public hearing was attended by 20 persons and consisted of three parts:

1. Introduction
2. Description of the Draft CEPP
3. Public Questions and Input

During the Introduction, Mayor Robert Jakubowski described the effort to generate the CEPP and why the public hearing was being held.

Mr. Vlad Odarchenko of ACT Engineers, Robbinsville New Jersey, who is the consultant charged with producing the CEPP, essentially provided an executive summary of the draft plan. He described the purpose of the plan; the Audubon Task Force that developed the plan; and how that plan integrated into the State's energy master planning. Most importantly, Mr. Odarchenko went over the six strategies that the Audubon task force used to prioritize the various options under consideration.

The Public Questions and Input session was informal in nature and was led by Mayor Jakubowski. Each of the six strategies was covered in varying levels of detail. Information on how and why choices were made was provided. Questions and comments from the public on each of the strategies comprised the bulk of the session. Responses to the questions and comments when possible were also made. Mr. Odarchenko and Mayor Jakubowski will serve as the contact points for future inquiries and comments regarding the subject document.

The CEPP identified the priorities for various potential projects or actions (high, medium, low, and to be determined) that were established by the Audubon task force. Solar power projects and electric vehicle charging stations were two of the identified priorities that were discussed in detail at the hearing.

Replacement of diesel-powered vehicles, especially garbage trucks, was an option considered but like all measures would necessarily be subject to the availability of implementation funds as well as a favorable cost benefit analysis prior to being initiated. Regulatory streamlining to facilitate installation; training for fire and police related to specific potential projects; and other similar programs associated with the larger projects were also identified as priorities and received favorably by the audience.

It should be noted that some areas like energy efficiency improvement were prioritized in the CEPP but are already being encouraged among the residents through existing grant efforts. As such, the discussion on such options was more limited. In addition, other options such as LED light installation to improve energy efficiency, bench marking high use buildings, and microgrid construction were topics raised and briefly discussed.

Education/outreach to the community on various topics was encouraged based on audience input. Commenters specifically suggested that outreach to the community about solar power options and information distribution should be increased. The purpose would be to facilitate accurate decision-making as well as encourage installation of solar power units.

In general, there seemed to be a consensus with the direction the draft CEPP was taking. Participation at the next public hearing as well as review of the CEPP document was encouraged. The public hearing ended approximately at 8:00 p.m.

Be advised that the draft CEPP is currently posted on the Borough website. An updated version will replace that document prior to the next public hearing depending on when any needed suggested changes from the current hearing can be incorporated.

This summary was prepared by Sustainable Audubon on January 5, 2024.