

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

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Town of Somers
WESTCHESTER COUNTY, N.Y.

SOMERS TOWN HOUSE
335 ROUTE 202
SOMERS, NY 10589

DON BLEASDALE
CHAIRMAN



MEETING MINUTES
July 14, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

The following members were present: Don Bleasdale, Long Garrett, Jennifer Barker Kuskovski, Mike Scorrano and Rick Warren.

Flo Brodley was absent.

Residents Elisa Bremner, Jill Gardner and Annie Gullen were also present.

Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Bleasdale and seconded by Mrs. Barker Kuskovski to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2026, meeting as submitted. All were in favor.

Fall Repair Café

To keep the momentum going, Ms. Brodley has made arrangements to hold a Repair Café in the fall on Sunday, October 4th from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Somers Library Program Room. The library will co-sponsor this event by offering recyclable crafts for kids at the event. Ms. Brodley has already reached out to the artisans who participated in the Repair Café in April and has gotten some commitments for the fall.

If anyone has any contacts in Somers that may have a skill that can be included, please let Ms. Brodley know. She will also put an article in the Heritage Hills newsletter about the need for artisans. Mrs. Schirmer reached out to the Parks and Recreation Department about reserving the pavilion in Reis Park in case there are artisans that can handle larger projects, and they have agreed to do so.

Committee Newsletter

Last week, a newsletter including the history of the Committee prepared by Ms. Brodley was emailed by the Town. It has also been posted on the Town website. Suggestions

for future newsletter topics included medication take back, food scraping, recycling. North Castle sells recycle kits and that info might be appropriate to include in a newsletter.

Future Events/Workshops

Suggestions included: invite Barton and Loguidice to present a program on raingardens; invite WIN Waste to present a program on recycling, both in conjunction with the Library, as well as programs on composting, battery disposal and shredded paper disposal. Perhaps Cornell Cooperative Extension and Lasdon Park have speakers available as well.

Town Buildings Recycling Efforts Plan for Improvement

Mr. Clinchy and Mr. Bleasdale conducted an inventory of recycling efforts in the Town-owned buildings. Some are doing it well while others need improvement and will be assisted. Blue bins for recycling were ordered for some of the buildings. Ten were placed in the library and 4 in Van Tassell. There are still some that have to be distributed. Labels were purchased to be added to the existing cans in Reis Park to alert users as to the appropriate cans to use. Perhaps a memo should be sent to employees about proper preparation of recyclables.

Proposed Partial Ban on Gas Powered Leaf Blowers

A memo was sent to the Town Board proposing a partial ban on gas powered leaf blowers. The Committee was invited to attend the Town Board Work Session on June 4th. Mr. Garrett attended to represent the Committee along with Open Space Committee Chair Michael Barnhart who touched on most of the items. Mr. Garrett was able to add some additional information. The Town Board thanked them for coming to the meeting. Some were disappointed that a further commitment wasn't made. As this is an important topic, all agreed that there needs to be another request at some point of the Town Board to deal with this issue and educating the community is important. This will be discussed again to come up with a plan. In the meantime, an email was received from the County that they cannot enact a County-wide ban. Perhaps the suggestion at this point should be proposing changes to the existing code on when landscaping work can be done as now it reads from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., seven days a week. Mr. Garrett is doing some research about what other Towns are doing.

Recycling

Mrs. Barker Kuskovski reported about some information she learned about what happens to the recyclables in Somers. She also has a 7-minute video she will share with everyone. The recyclables in a public place are checked by eye. If they have been prepared properly, scraped clean and rinsed out, they go to WIN Waste's facility in Stamford, which has an infrared reader to check again. If it is garbage, it goes to Wheelabrator Westchester Power Plant in Peekskill which converts energy into bulk electrical power to the Westchester County electric grid, which delivers it to electricity consumers. Although the WIN Waste facility in Stamford is top notch, evidently the facility in Peekskill is quite old and outdated. Statistics that include how much goes to Stamford and how much goes to Peekskill would be interesting to see. It was

suggested that members of the Committee visit these sites as well as the Westchester County Recycling Household Material Recovery Facility in Valhalla.

Mrs. Gullen reported that Keep Somers Beautiful was at the Independence Day Celebration in Reis Park on July 1st promoting don't leave waste/litter and distributed clean-up bags. The Superintendent of the Parks and Recreation Department commented that there was far less for the parks staff to clean up the next day.

A question came up as to what happens with the food scraps that are left at the Highway Department. In addition, there was a suggestion that the signage be a bit more specific.

Home Battery Storage

Mr. Warren shared some information he read on home battery storage from solar panels. Mrs. Schirmer will check on what the code says about this and report back at the next meeting.

EV Charger Outlets, Heat Pumps and Solar Panel Building Permits Issued

During June, the Building Department issued one permit for an Electric Car Charger; six for Heat Pumps and two for Solar Panels.

Community Resiliency, Economic Sustainability, and Technology (CREST) Grant

At their meeting on July 10, 2025, the Town Board approved spending the \$100,000 CREST Grant money received through Senator Harckham on two plug-in hybrid vehicles, one battery electric utility vehicle and battery powered tools for Parks and Recreation to be used for property maintenance. As a result of the change made regarding the use of these funds, on December 23rd, the Supervisor had to re-sign the documents. On April 24th, the grant disbursement agreement was signed by the Supervisor and signed by the Town Attorney. The Town is now in receipt of the funds to purchase a Toyota RAV4 plug in hybrid car and two electric gators for the parks staff.

Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Grant Award

At their July 11, 2024, Town Board meeting, the Town Board passed a resolution to have the Supervisor execute the CSC Grant Application that is part of the 2025-2026 Climate Action Planning Institute of Westchester County (CAPI Westchester). CAPI Westchester is a regional climate action planning leadership program that is designed to lead participants through the development of a Local Government Operations GHG Inventory and Government Operations Climate Action Plan which are key priority actions under the CSC program. The initiative will convene in the spring of 2025, will last for 16 months and is facilitated by the Hudson Valley Regional Council in partnership with ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. Each community will complete their own GOGHGI and develop a draft GOCAP using ICLEI developed software and tools designed for this purpose. This process has started with Mr. Bleasdale and Mrs. Schirmer providing the requested information which to date was a copy of the NYSEG and Sueco Oil bills for each building for 2023 and 2024. Liz Sun of the Hudson Valley Regional Council reported that the DEC is reviewing the workplan, and they anticipate that it will be completed in late Spring. Once the workplan is

approved, Ms. Sun will be reaching out to the Town with a draft memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the municipality and Westchester County. Once the MOUs are signed, the County will sign the contract with DEC and the program can officially begin. It is the hope to have the MOUs for the Town review this summer and kick off the cohort meetings in the fall. They will resume data collection for the GHG inventory while they work on getting under contract.

Mrs. Schirmer was informed that the Town is not registered as a Climate Smart Community, yet we have been involved in their program. This was researched further, and information has to be input into their database. Mr. Bleasdale and Mrs. Schirmer will meet with the Town's Hudson Valley Regional representative to discuss this further.

Municipal Reduction and Recycling (MWRR) Grant for an Organic Recycling Yard Project

At some point as scheduled time allows, the Town will be applying for the Municipal Reduction and Recycling Grant for the Town to create an organic recycling yard at the Highway Department.

NYS Department of State's Brownfield Opportunity Area Program

In the beginning of January, Mr. Bleasdale, Mrs. Schirmer and the Supervisor met with the Sofia Ohrynowicz of Millenium Strategies regarding a grant to have an assessment done of the Town-owned Nine Acres property in Shenorock. It was indicated that the NYS Department of State's Brownfield Opportunity Area Program is a viable option and should reopen in May 2026, with an expected application deadline of July 31st.

Tomorrow, Mr. Bleasdale, Mrs. Schirmer and the Town Supervisor will be meeting again with Sofia Ohrynowicz of Millenium Strategies to discuss this further. The plan is to apply for this grant, and the requirements will include a work plan, budget, letters of support (and documentation of additional community engagement), and a resolution. Ms. Ohrynowicz will write the grant, and the Committee will assist in seeing it to fruition with the Town if it is granted. Evidently, an assessment was already done therefore this project will be put on hold.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m. The next regular monthly meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 8th at 7:00 p.m. The Committee will not meet in August.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Schirmer, Secretary
Somers Energy and Environment Committee

cc: Energy and Environment Committee
Town Board
Town Clerk