

MEETING OF THE ITHACA TOWN BOARD
March 23, 2020

TB Resolution 2020 - 049: Resolution in Support of a Green New Deal (GND)

Whereas, human-caused climate change is causing an increase in extreme weather events that threaten human life, healthy communities, and critical infrastructure, and

Whereas, there is a clear emerging international consensus that to avoid the most severe impacts of a changing climate, we should work together to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, and

Whereas, to accomplish this, scientists say that the entire world needs to get to net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050, and

Whereas, the Town of Ithaca has demonstrated its desire and commitment to be a leader in sustainability through the following actions and initiatives:

- Adopted the NYS DEC Climate Smart Communities Pledge (2009)
- Created a shared Sustainability Planner position (2010)
- Performed GHG emissions inventories
- Adopted the Government Energy Action Plan, which contains recommended actions to achieve a 30% reduction in GHG emission in government operations by 2020 and 80% by 2050 (2011)
- Adopted the Comprehensive Plan (2014), which features sustainability as a thread-through theme and contains a chapter on Energy and climate protection
- The Ithaca Area Wastewater Treatment Facility, recognized by the U.S. DOE for its efforts, has improved the efficiency of its operations dramatically and offsets its energy needs on-site through the production and use of biogas
- Currently working to upgrade its streetlights to LED technology, cutting GHG emissions and lighting costs dramatically
- Purchasing renewable energy credits (RECs) to offset GHG emissions from purchased electricity
- Accepted the Ithaca Green Building Policy report, with the intention of enacting legislation in 2020
- Installed an electric vehicle (EV) charging station at Town Hall, incorporated two EVs into the Town fleet, and partnered in EV Tompkins, which aims to double the number of local EV drivers
- Led a collaboration with four other municipalities to develop a residential energy score program to improve the energy efficiency of existing homes. New York State is now rolling out regional pilot programs in several locations across the state, including Ithaca, thanks in part to these efforts
- Adopted solar energy regulations to facilitate development and operation of solar systems
- Currently developing a Form-based Code
- Adopted a Green Purchasing Policy (2014)
- Initiated composting programs at Town facilities

- Achieved Clean Energy Communities and Climate Smart Communities designations
- Leveraged and promoted local and national sustainability initiatives, and

Whereas, versions of a Green New Deal, which have been proposed at the Federal level and adopted by New York State and the City of Ithaca, aim to address climate change and related social and economic issues; and

Whereas, local sustainability professionals, activists, and a growing youth climate movement have urged local municipalities to more proactively address the climate change crisis, and

Whereas, by working on a Green New Deal initiative, the Town can build on existing momentum, and

Whereas, there would be multiple benefits besides greenhouse gas reduction, including improved community health and economic vitality through job creation in areas such as renewable energy, and

Whereas, the Town of Ithaca acknowledges that to implement a Green New Deal will require collaborations with New York State and Federal governments as well as other municipalities, now therefore be it

Resolved, that the Town of Ithaca hereby adopts a goal of achieving an equitable transition to carbon-neutrality town-wide by 2030, and be it further

Resolved, that the Town of Ithaca adopts a goal to meet the electricity needs of Town government operations with 100% regionally sourced renewable electricity by 2025, and be it further

Resolved, that the Town of Ithaca adopts a goal to reduce emissions from the Town fleet of vehicles by 50% from the 2010 levels by 2025, recognizing that until battery or other technology is more advanced, this may require GHG offsets, and be it further

Resolved, that the Town of Ithaca endorses the following strategies and actions to achieve these goals:

- Create a Green New Deal Action Plan that provides details on how to achieve the Town of Ithaca Green New Deal goals for government operations and the broader community, update the Plan regularly, and assign staff as needed to implement the plan
- Frame an approach that incorporates policy and cost implications and the costs of not taking action
- Adopt a Green Building Policy for existing buildings in 2021/22
- Work with our partners to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions related to treatment and distribution of water and wastewater
- Encourage and facilitate the production and use of renewable energy
- Build toward a resilient community by preparing for and adapting to unavoidable impacts and costs of climate change

- Apply for grants, including federal and state, to help with implementation of GND initiatives
- Track and annually report on progress towards the goals listed above, and be it further

Resolved, that the Town of Ithaca commits to the following equity principles in the implementation of the GND:

- Ensure that processes are fair and inclusive in the development and implementation of programs and policies
- Ensure that benefits and burdens of policies and programs are distributed fairly
- Institutionalize accountability processes and implement programs that sustain positive outcomes, and be it further

Resolved, that the Supervisor and Town Board will work with a broad array of stakeholders, including, department heads and town staff, members of appropriate boards and commissions, businesses, community groups, academic institutions, organizations, town residents, and other local governments to achieve these goals.

Moved: Rich DePaolo

Second: Tee-Ann Hunter

Vote: ayes – DePaolo, Hunter, Howe, Levine, Leary, Bleiwas and Goodman