

2007 Conference on the Environment  
Schenectady, New York

Bedford: A case study of a town's start on the road to carbon neutrality

Start

April, 2007: Conversation for Action 1

Forming the Energy Advisory Panel

May Meeting 2007:

Members include a farmer, businessman, general contractor, investment banker, media consultant, teacher, group facilitator, homemaker, town supervisor.

Chose a chair – the homemaker

Initial Thoughts:

1. Individual Efforts by Town Residents

Charles Komanoff, an energy economist in New York, said in a recent NYT's article: "There isn't a single American household above the poverty line that couldn't cut their CO<sub>2</sub> at least 25% in six months through a straightforward series of fairly simple and terrifically cost-effective methods."

2. Bedford's Governmental Responsibilities

The wheel has already been invented. The problem is to find the wheel.

We Begin Work

June Meeting 2007

1. Pursue joining ICLEI
2. Research other towns and their efforts
3. Explore campaign/education aspect
4. Explore resources/grants/incentives
5. Explore bigger municipalities for models
6. Bring the voice of residents to the conversation

June 15, 2007: Conversation for Action 2

July Meeting 2007

1. Further our pursuit of joining ICLEI, receive initial information, choose a baseline year
2. Report on Salt Lake City's Action Plan
3. Report on Huntington and Babylon, LI's Energy Star programs; on Woodstock's March 2007 resolution, declaring themselves a Carbon Neutral Community
4. Report on Scarsdale's School District Sustainability Policy
5. Proposal for an "Energy Conservation Education Campaign" to include:
  - a. Getting information up on the town's website
  - b. Print Campaign: direct mail, letters to editor, local newspaper "Green Column", press releases
  - c. Green Certification program for businesses and residents (modeled after the anti-pesticide program for healthy lawns and water in Saratoga, NY: "This lawn is safe for children and pets".
  - d. Schools: get kids to use buses or walk wherever possible, no idling, art and essay contest, etc.

- e. Kick-off to campaign, tied into a significant event, such as banning the use of plastic bags at retail establishments throughout town
6. Set up meeting with Town Departmental heads to discuss program

July 16, 2007: Meet with the Town Departmental heads

#### August Meeting 2007

1. Breakdown of community into separate topics: education (schools), community engagement, municipal inventory, business community
2. Discussion on whether or not we could include the residential/business/school community in the initial action plan, or should we concentrate on the municipal only (since the inventory of costs is much more easily available) and use that as the example to the rest. Outcome-undecided.
3. Begin ICLEI inventory. Meet with town planner. Main worker is our chair.
4. Using an ESCO (Energy Service Company) to finance energy saving projects

August 24, 2007: Municipal Leaders' Summit on Climate Protection

#### September Meeting 2007

1. Continue working on ICLEI.
2. Contact NYSEERDA for possible grants
3. Discuss new Pool House Design in the context of energy conservation
4. Discuss Westchester County Global Warming Task Force Report
5. Discuss subgroups (show video made over the summer with school children expounding on the ways you can save money by driving smart)

September 19, 2007: EAP gives interim report to Town Board

September 26, 2007: Attend Sierra Club presentation of Cool Cities

#### October Meeting 2007

1. Meet with Clean Air Cool Planet executive director
2. ICLEI training set for October 10<sup>th</sup>
3. Discuss Town Stakeholders' Summit (modeled after Municipal Leaders' Summit)
4. Discuss meeting with other Westchester communities (met at the Municipal Leaders' Summit)

October 5, 2007: Meet with other county communities

October 10, 2007: ICLEI training

#### What's Next

1. Complete ICLEI Inventory and develop townwide action plan
2. Stakeholders Summit, November 26, 2007
3. Sustainable Bedford (action committee)

For additional information contact:  
Town of Bedford Conservation Board  
Conservation@BedfordNY.info

# CONVERSATIONS-FOR-ACTION



## A CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE

### Vision

*An ongoing community conversation that leads to wise action on global warming:*

- At every level, from the personal to the political, and in every aspect, from the educational to the commercial.

### Mission

The mission of the project is to initiate and assist this conversation-for-action so that it can access our innate collective wisdom and inspire sustainable commitment to action, as well as policy change at all levels. The hope is that such an approach be replicated in every local community. Such local applications might be called 'Connecting ..... (name of town)': Fostering Cultural Change in the face of Climate Change.'

### Goals

Goals that mark the path toward this vision include:

- Community gatherings that will inspire and direct action, including personal commitment at a number of levels, and continuing conversations-for-action in every area of life: schools, churches/temples, businesses, neighborhoods...
- The development of resources to assist this event and the continuing process of commitment and ongoing conversations-for-action.
- Concrete implementation of ideas in homes, schools, places of worship, businesses, community processes (transport, energy production, waste management, water use, etc.)
- Appropriate exposure of the process that will inspire and guide other efforts.
- A Town Model response: energy use, waste/recycling, transport, policy, etc.

Bedford Energy Advisory Panel

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- The engagement of political leadership, from the local to the County and the Federal, who will receive the findings and insights of these conversations and translate them into policy and practices at each level.

### **Important Elements of the Process**

#### **Community Gatherings**

- Initial Gathering to catalyze, launch:
  - The presence of leadership to lend their support to the project, including all levels of political leadership
  - A good – effective, realistic, relevant – presentation of the challenge
  - Facilitated engagement of participants
  - Allies in the form of local projects, and other related efforts
- Second Gathering to build the momentum:
  - More local focus in presentation
  - Facilitated engagement of participants
  - Updates from local projects, and other related efforts (ideally the Town)
  - Celebration: music, picnic....local artists

#### **Resources for the Ongoing Conversations-for-Action**

- Appropriate information on the issues of global warming as they will be experienced locally
- Suggestions for action at every level
- Guidelines for making conversations-for-action more creative and effective

#### **Ongoing Relationships**

- With the various levels of leadership in order to channel ideas and initiatives toward action and policy development
- With other efforts in the community

#### **Appropriate Exposure of the Process**

- A Green Column in the local newspaper
- A Blog to allow the sharing of ideas across the community
- Presence at other events: host a 'table/booth.'

#### **The Town Model**

- The development of a formal Town response to climate change:
  - Energy production, Water use, Waste management, etc.
  - For example, The Town of Bedford as a 'Responsible Community'

#### **Methods for 'Harvesting' the Ongoing Conversations**

- A 'distilling conversation' of representatives from the various ongoing conversations to explore emerging themes and help translate them into other levels of action: school programs, local, county and federal policy.
  - This could happen within a Town or across Town boundaries

# RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BEDFORD COMMUNITY

June 15 Event at Bedford Hills Park

## Transport

- ❖ Anti-idling laws
- ❖ Town vehicles to be hybrids
- ❖ Bike racks
- ❖ Bike paths
- ❖ Promote/Publicize buses

## Shopping/Retailers

- ❖ Sign on shop doors: 'remember your canvas bags'
- ❖ Ban plastic bags in stores
- ❖ Bagless shopping: a coop of stores that agree
- ❖ Put pressure on retailers to buy and sell responsibly
- ❖ Pressure stores to sell recycled products

## Recycling

- ❖ Make sure recycled products really are..
- ❖ Recycle 'recyclable products'
- ❖ Regulate recycling
- ❖ Incentivize recycling
- ❖ Recycling receptacles in public places

## Food

- ❖ Support Farmers' Markets

## Schools

- ❖ Add sustainability to school curriculums
- ❖ School vehicles to be hybrids

## Government

- ❖ Government bodies to reduce paper load
- ❖ A 'reduce junk mail' law
- ❖ Improve Green building codes

## Promotion/Communication

- ❖ Anti-litter campaign
- ❖ Communication focus – PR – to spread the word
- ❖ Share info on 'best practices'
- ❖ Education: schools, clubs, individuals

## **5 Energy Conservation Tips**

1. A compact fluorescent bulb that is the equivalent of a 60 watt incandescent will save you nearly \$8 annually in electric costs. If every home in Bedford changed one light to a CFL, we would prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of more than **130** cars.
2. 10% of a typical home's electric consumption is through appliances, televisions, computers, cellphone and various other chargers. Even in standby modes, energy is being continuously being consumed. When not in use, unplug them all. Turning one computer off at night can save nearly \$100 per year in electric costs.
3. Eliminate plastic bags and disposable water bottles from your life. The 100 billion plastic checkout bags America uses each year require 12 million barrels of oil to produce. Use Nalgene bottles for your drinking water.
4. Buy green power. Go to [www.powernaturally.org](http://www.powernaturally.org) and find out how you can replace the power you use with power from clean, renewable sources like wind and solar.
5. Sierra Club reports that making lunches for school every day creates an average of 67 pounds of garbage per child--or more than 18,000 pounds per school--each year. Eschewing disposable packaging and single-serving items can save families \$250 a year. For more information go to [www.Wastefreelunches.org](http://www.Wastefreelunches.org)

By changing the majority of bulbs in their house to warm-white CFLs, unplugging TVs, chargers and various other machines and computers in their home, one Bedford family reduced their energy bill by 49%.

**A message from the Town of Bedford and Bedford's Energy  
Advisory Panel.**

**Lee V.A. Roberts, Supervisor**