

Woodstock's Zero-Carbon Initiative
Passed on March 12, 2007

RESOLUTION 103-07

DECLARE CARBON NEUTRAL COMMUNITY

Offered by Councilman McKenna, seconded by Councilwoman Simonson:

WHEREAS, the first United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the first Earth Summit was held in 1992 and attended by 108 Heads of State from around the world for the purpose of discussing the effects of global warming and,

WHEREAS, in December 1997, the Kyoto Protocol was formalized as part of the United Nations framework convention on climate change, setting mandatory targets for reduction of greenhouses gases for signatory nations and,

WHEREAS, on February 16, 2005, the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement to address climate disruption, went into effect in the 141 countries that have ratified it to date; 38 of those countries are now legally required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on average 5.2 percent below 1990 levels by 2012; and

WHEREAS, to date the United States has not become a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol, and

WHEREAS, in June 2005, the U.S. Conference of Mayors unanimously adopted strong policy resolutions calling for cities, communities and the federal government to take local actions to reduce global warming pollution; and

WHEREAS, in December 2005, the Municipal Leaders Summit on Climate Change, with 37 countries participating, also asserted the need for global action and the development of local initiatives and,

WHEREAS, since that time ICLEI, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, has developed tools for local governments to address these pressing sustainability issues and

WHEREAS, members of the Town Board of Woodstock participated in a conference call with ICLEI representatives as well as county and local government leaders to determine what actions collectively we could take in the Hudson Valley to address the impact of global warming and,

WHEREAS, the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the international community's most respected assemblage of scientists, has found that climate disruption is

a reality and that human activities are largely responsible for increasing concentrations of global warming pollution; and

WHEREAS, recent, well-documented impacts of climate disruption include average global sea level increases of four to eight inches during the 20th century; a 40 percent decline in Arctic sea-ice thickness; and nine of the ten hottest years on record occurring in the past decade; and

WHEREAS, climate disruption of the magnitude now predicted by the scientific community will cause extremely costly disruption of human and natural systems throughout the world including: increased risk of floods or droughts; sea level rises that interact with coastal storms to erode beaches, inundate land, and damage structures; more frequent and extreme heat waves; more frequent and greater concentrations of smog; and

WHEREAS, the United States of America, with less than five percent of the world's population, is responsible for producing approximately 25 percent of the world's global warming pollutants; and

WHEREAS, the Kyoto Protocol emissions reduction target for the US would have been 7 percent below 1990 levels by 2012; and

WHEREAS, many leading U.S. companies that have adopted greenhouse gas reduction programs to demonstrate corporate social responsibility have also publicly expressed preference for the U.S. to adopt precise and mandatory emissions targets and timetables as a means by which to remain competitive in the international marketplace, to mitigate financial risk and to promote sound investment decisions; and

WHEREAS, state and local governments throughout the United States are adopting emission reduction targets and programs and that this leadership is bipartisan, coming from Republican and Democratic governors and mayors alike; and

WHEREAS, many municipalities throughout the nation, both large and small, are reducing global warming pollutants through programs that provide economic and quality of life benefits such as reduced energy bills, green space preservation, air quality improvements, reduced traffic congestion, improved transportation choices, and economic development and job creation through energy conservation and new energy technologies; and

WHEREAS on February 7, 2007 the Woodstock Environmental Commission held a special meeting on Sustainability in order to gather input from the residents of Woodstock about actions the Town Board should take to guide the citizens of Woodstock and its government in reducing their own carbon emissions; and

WHEREAS, on February 7, 2007, the Woodstock Environmental Commission adopted the following resolutions recommending that the Woodstock Town Board;

Declare its intention to become a carbon neutral community in ten years,
and

Establish a task force to gather information and advise the Town with respect to achieving this goal, and

Encourage Ulster County to make resources available with respect to achieving the above goal; and

WHEREAS the Town of Woodstock has taken some steps toward reducing greenhouse emissions that contribute to global warming, to wit

Subsidizing the creation of wind power installations,

Installing a 16.8 kilowatt photovoltaic solar panel array on the Town Hall with a similar installation to be installed on the highway facility,

Installing geo-thermal heating and cooling in the new highway facility,

Making an improvement to sludge processing at the wastewater treatment plant which ended the practice of using propane fuel to dry the sludge,

Committing to a LEED-certified approach for renovation of the Woodstock Town Hall, and

WHEREAS much more should and can be accomplished by the Town of Woodstock to reduce greenhouse emissions, to wit

A) Urging the federal and state governments to enact policies and programs to meet or beat the target of reducing global warming pollution levels to 7 percent below 1990 levels by 2012, including efforts to reduce the United States' dependence on fossil fuels and accelerate the development of clean, economical energy resources and fuel-efficient technologies such as conservation, end-use efficiency, demand-side management, district-scale ground source heating and cooling systems, wind and solar energy, wave and tidal energy, fuel cells, efficient motor vehicles, and bio-fuels;

B) Urging the U.S. Congress to pass bipartisan greenhouse gas reduction legislation that includes clear timetables and emissions limits and

C) Creating a Sustainability Task Force for the purpose of assisting the Town with:

Conducting a baseline inventory of global warming pollutants

Establishing targets and a timetable to lower, then ultimately to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions

Developing and implementing a local climate action plan,

Measuring, verifying and reporting performance, and

Establishing recommendations for local Green Building initiatives

WHEREAS the above actions will help the Town of Woodstock to strive to exceed Kyoto Protocol targets for reducing global warming pollution, and shall prompt further actions in our own operations such as the following:

Adopt and enforce land-use policies that reduce sprawl, preserve open space, and create compact, walkable communities;

Promote transportation options such as bicycle trails and/or lanes, commute trip reduction programs, amenities for car pooling and public transit;

Increase the use of clean, alternative energy by, for example, investing in "green tags" and advocating the development of renewable energy resources;

Make energy efficiency a priority through building mechanical systems, and urging employees to conserve energy and save money;

Purchase only Energy Star equipment and appliances for Town use;

Practice and promote sustainable building practices using the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program or a similar system;

Increase the average fuel efficiency of municipal fleet vehicles; launch an employee education program including anti-idling messages; convert diesel vehicles to bio-diesel;

Evaluate opportunities to increase pump efficiency in water and wastewater systems; recover wastewater treatment methane for energy production;

Increase recycling rates in Town operations and in the community;

Maintain healthy forests; promote tree planting to increase shading and to absorb CO₂; and

Help educate the public, schools, other jurisdictions, professional associations, business and industry about reducing global warming pollution.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Woodstock Town Board commits to a Zero-Carbon Initiative, leading the Woodstock community by example and by implementing policies resulting in no net emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases by the end of 2017, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that as a public-private partnership, the Woodstock Zero-Carbon Initiative shall feature Town Government as a key stakeholder in a comprehensive community carbon-neutrality effort, which includes institutions, businesses, civic organization, and individual families and residents, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Town of Woodstock will continue it's close collaboration with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and its regional representative, Mid Hudson Energy Smart Communities, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Town of Woodstock endorses the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement as amended by the 73rd annual U.S. Conference of Mayors, as a first step toward a zero-carbon result and urges municipalities from around the world to join this effort, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Town of Woodstock shall create a Sustainability Task Force to work in conjunction with the Woodstock Zero-Carbon Initiative and ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability; in particular, working to partner with efforts of the Ulster County Planning Board, other County Agencies, cities and towns in our region, and other appropriate organizations, to track the progress and implementation of the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement, with the ultimate goal of making the Mid Hudson region a Zero-Carbon Zone.

All voted, 5-0:

Supervisor Wilber - aye

Councilwoman Simonson - aye

Councilman Knight - aye

Councilman McKenna - aye

Councilman Collins - aye

Thunderous applause followed the vote.