

# **MIDDLEFIELD CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITY**

## **HISTORY**

November 2021-- upon recommendation from the Town Planning Board, the Town of Middlefield passed a resolution to become a Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) designated Climate Smart Community (CSC). The Climate Smart Community Program is a New York State program that helps local governments take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate (<https://climatesmart.ny.gov/>). By participating in the Climate Smart Community Program, the Town of Middlefield will enhance community resilience to severe weather events, climate related public health challenges, and conservation of municipal energy use. Mr. Jeffrey Woepfel, selected as the Town of Middlefield Climate Smart Community Task Force Coordinator, will direct the efforts of five Middlefield citizen volunteers to realize Climate Smart Community Bronze Certification. Concurrent goals were established to achieve designation of the Town of Middlefield as a New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) sponsored Clean Energy Community (<https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/clean-energy-communities>). The Town of Middlefield is a member of the Otsego County Climate Smart Institute (<https://occainfo.org/climate-smart-communities/>).

Working with the support and guidance from the Otsego County Conservation Association (OCCA) and the Town of Middlefield's Planning and Town Boards, a local and regional approach to addressing climate change was adopted.

To realize the goal of becoming a Certified Climate Smart Community, and begin the process of adapting to and mitigating the deleterious impact of climate change on our community, the Task Force focused on accomplishing the priority elements cited in the CSC Certification Action Checklist. These high-impact actions are designed to: develop an inventory of town government greenhouse gas emissions, decrease energy use, shift to clean renewable energy, use climate smart materials and management techniques, implement climate smart land use policy and practices, enhance community resilience to climate change, support a green innovation economy, inform and inspire our community and engage all community stakeholders in an evolving process of climate action.

## **SPECIFIC TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD TOWN BOARD, PLANNING BOARD AND CSC TASK**

## FORCE INITIATIVES

- August 2021--the Planning Board worked with OCCA to explore the process of developing an updated Comprehensive Plan. OCCA wrote a grant proposal to the DEC, for the Town of Middlefield Resiliency Project to address the Climate Smart Community Priority Element # 6: Develop a Comprehensive Plan with Sustainability Elements. The Town Board has assumed responsibility for reviewing and updating the town's Comprehensive Plan.
- Town of Middlefield Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Educational Program was presented at a public meeting by Engineering and Town Planning Consultant, Mr. Bruce Boncke, on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022.
- Task Force and OCCA leadership met with Brekke Holub, Chair of the Science Department at Milford Central Schools to discuss High School student engagement in the Town of Middlefield CSC initiative. Two Milford High School students, under the auspices of Ms. Holub, will begin active participation with our CSC Task Force in September, 2022. Goal of this program is to include multi-generational input into our Town's effort to address climate change, while developing a regional approach to maturing the relationship between municipalities and educational institutions in our county. OCCA will adopt the framework of this initiative to serve as a "Pilot Program" to mature and disseminate this effort to other communities seeking CSC Certification.
- August 9, 2022, a meeting of the Middlefield Town Board with Joule Community Power (Division of Joule Assets) educator and implementation specialist Alexia Lamb, explored a potential partnership in the development of a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) electricity supply program. The goals of a CCA Program are to enable our town to leverage the collective buying power of our residents and small businesses to secure more favorable terms on their electricity supply, protect consumers, and choose renewable generation sources. Joule Community Power is currently the sole CCA community power company operating in New York State.
- The CSC Task Force continues to explore available local and regional composting alternatives, that may benefit our Town residents and businesses.