

SHARE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SHERIDAN HOLLOW ALLIANCE FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY—AUGUST 2022



April 2022: Assemblymembers Fahy, McDonald, Senator Breslin, County Legislator Merton Simpson and Bob Cohen of Citizen Action of New York at Renewable Capitol press conference.

Renewable Capitol means a cleaner community

SHARE won a major victory when we stopped New York State from siting fracked gas boilers on Sheridan Avenue to power the State Capitol and other state buildings. However, the existing Sheridan Avenue Steam Plant (SASP) continues to release greenhouse gasses and pollution that can cause respiratory illnesses and other health problems in the community.

Last session, local state legislators introduced the Renewable Capitol Act to mandate a total conversion of the Capitol and plaza to renewable energy within three years. The state Office of General Services would be required to de-

velop a plan for the project to protect the health of nearby residents and the climate. SHARE advocates that geothermal heating be used for the project.

The bill has strong community involvement provisions, including an advisory committee with representation from area neighborhoods, and mandated public hearings. For more information, please contact us.

Sheridan Hollow Designated Brownfield Opportunity Area

After years of work by the Affordable Housing Partnership (AHP) along with community leaders, the state declared 106 acres in Sheridan Hollow a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA). Sites in Sheridan Hollow include former dry cleaners, auto stations, tanneries and more. The BOA Master Plan will help to guide development with support for affordable housing, job creation, investment in green infrastructure, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Developers will be eligible for tax incentives to clean up potentially contaminated sites, and nonprofits can apply for pre-development grants for projects in those areas. Thanks to AHP's efforts, funds will be available for improving our community.



In 2017 community and climate groups came together to stop a proposed fracked gas powerplant on Sheridan Avenue, to promote clean renewable energy for the State Capitol complex, and to eliminate exposure from health hazards to community residents from the operation of the state's power plant in Sheridan Hollow. This newsletter provides an update on our ongoing efforts to promote environmental justice in Sheridan

Hollow. For more information about SHARE contact Merton Simpson (robcor295@gmail) or Ruth Foster (rmfosterny@gmail.com) or check out our website at SHAREAlbany.org.

We Stopped the Proposed Powerplant — Now What?

After three years of fighting the state's proposal to add new fracked gas powered turbines in Sheridan Hollow, in 2019 the Governor and Legislature agreed that the funds slated for that project should be spent on renewable energy instead. Currently, the Capitol and Empire State Plaza are heated and cooled by the Sheridan Avenue Steam Plant (SASP), powered by fracked gas.

SHARE continues to monitor the New York State Power Authority's (NYPA) and the Office of General Service's (OGS) implementation of the legislative directive to use these funds for renewable projects.

So far, the state has invested \$60 million to replace the polluting emergency diesel generators on Sheridan Avenue. New cleaner and quieter generators are being installed in the former ANSWERS building. Major equipment has already been installed and the new generators should begin operating in 2023 when wiring and other work is completed.

One of the gas powered chillers has been replaced with an electric one at a cost of \$30



million. It is expected to reduce emissions of the SASP by 18 percent. New LED lighting costing \$16 million will further reduce energy use at the plaza. And NYPA is looking into the possibility of purchasing solar power from a solar farm on state land in Oneida County to cover the electric needs of the plaza.

In addition to these improvements, NYPA has hired an outside firm, Ramboll, to develop an Energy Infrastructure Master Plan to improve energy efficiency and reduce the climate impact of the plaza. Recommendations for a ten-year plan are expected by next summer, and will include energy and water usage and environmental justice impacts.

The Renewable Capitol Act proposed by SHARE would speed up this process and require the state to move to 100% clean renewable energy within three years for both the plaza complex and the Capitol.

Geothermal for Sheridan Hollow

Aztech Geothermal is in the process of studying the feasibility of installing district geothermal for 100 or so buildings in Sheridan Hollow, thanks to a grant from New York State (NYSERDA). If all goes as planned, this funding, along with a new law that allows utility companies to help with the development of geothermal districts, can make Sheridan Hollow a model for the state on how to transition urban neighborhoods to clean, sustainable and renewable energy for heating homes and businesses.

Merton Simpson, Albany County Legislator and Co-Chair of SHARE speaks at Climate Can't Wait Press Conference. climatecantwait.org

