Maryknoll/Ecogy Ribbon Cutting 9-14-21

It is my pleasure and privilege to be here today joining so many public and private organizations committed to sustainability. First, I would like to introduce my fellow board members who could join us and let you know that the others wished they could. Northern Wilcher, Liz Feldman, Jackie Shaw and Greg Meyer are also committed to a sustainable community.

Thanks to Sustainable Westchester and New York State, we have had a number of opportunities presented to us over the past 6 years or so to really dig in and up our game at the community level to focus on reducing carbon emissions. We have introduced leaf blower legislation, added electric vehicle charging stations in 3 of our town parks, purchased electric vehicles for our Town fleet, participate in 100% green Community Choice Aggregation, converted street lighting to LEDs, brought in air source heat pumps for heating and cooling, offered the Energy Smart Homes program to our community, established a battery energy storage code and adopted the NY Stretch Code energized, solarized, and so much more. We have focused on walkability and bike-ability and taken tree inventories, established a habitat stewards group, joined Croton 100 with Ossining 100, supported our Green Ossining committee to educate and empower people to work on reducing their carbon footprint, and with our EAC we have worked on overhauling land use policies, and we are currently developing a new Comprehensive Plan for the Town with a focus on Sustainability. With that laundry list, I would be remiss if I didn’t give a shameless plug here (and yes, pun intended!) for international Car Free Day which is coming up on September 22, 2021! The Town and Village are celebrating this event in partnership with Green Ossining once again, so I hope all of you here today will take the pledge to go Car Free or Car-Lite on September 22 by visiting [www.511nyrideshare.org](http://www.511nyrideshare.org) and unplug from fossil fuels!

One of the significant additions the Town of Ossining made in the last few years was adding in a solar code to allow larger scale, tier 3 solar developments to exist. Of course, we know these developments are a balance between protecting the environment through reduction of fossil fuel reliance and acknowledging the benefits we receive from trees, not all of which can be measured by carbon offsets. So we were super excited that the first real solar development project that got approved in Ossining was with Ecogy and Maryknoll, where an already cleared piece of property (a parking lot!) was identified as a place to build a solar canopy. And not only will it help Maryknoll balance their books, keep rain off the heads of those opening their umbrellas, and continue their mission to help sustain all of us, but it will also help the Fathers & Brothers offset their reliance on fossil fuels, and it’s also a community solar development –with 77 households in Ossining, including IFCA affordable housing’s tenants-- already signed up. And those who subscribe receive a 10% reduction off their electricity supply bill. Additionally, the 2,184 panel system will produce enough electricity to offset CO2 emissions from 2,292,637 gallons of gasoline consumed. The clean electricity produced over the project's lifetime is also equivalent to the carbon sequestered by 24,963 acres of U.S. forests in one year. And of course, Ecogy Energy’s focus on developing energy systems that serve traditionally underserved communities and low to moderate income individuals, who have historically been left out of the clean energy transition, was also extremely appealing. So we are grateful for this alignment of the heavens.

It feels like just a couple of weeks ago we were here for the groundbreaking. To be back now and see how this project has developed and is ready to go is just so exciting. We hope the sun continues to shine on this wonderful place, we know is close to God, and brings this clean, renewable energy from the sun to our community, in hopes that we can sustain our existence on this planet a little bit longer. We know that when everyone plays a role in sustainability, we all stand to benefit.

Thanks again to Ecogy, Maryknoll, the planning board, the EAC, the building department, our planners, lawyers, my office staff, and everyone else who participated in bringing this vision to fruition. We indeed are blessed!