



SUSTAINABLE WESTCHESTER

SUMMER 2023

Welcome

Welcome to Sustainable Westchester's refreshed newsletter! This is the official quarterly update from the leading community resilience advocate and leading renewable energy provider in Westchester County.

Our newsletter is an extension of the innovative programs we have developed over nearly ten years that help local municipalities create more resilient communities and achieve the greenhouse gas reduction targets mandated by New York's landmark Climate Act. As we strive to improve clean energy solutions, save municipalities and consumers money, and promote environmental justice within the communities we serve, this platform will provide you with updates on our programs and share insights from experts on our staff regarding important events and trends. We will also keep you informed about ways that you can engage with Sustainable Westchester and support our mission.

Thank you for your ongoing support and readership.

Sincerely,
The Sustainable Westchester Team



ANNOUNCEMENTS

After a thorough and rigorous search, Sustainable Westchester was excited to announce on May 25 that City of New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson will take the helm of the organization as its next Executive Director effective January 2024. Mayor Bramson's vast experience in government and passion for leading impactful climate action initiatives will be of immense value to Sustainable Westchester as the organization continues to grow.

Mayor Bramson has led New Rochelle for the last 18 years and is widely credited with advancing the city's sustainability goals. Under his leadership, New Rochelle is experiencing its fastest growth in a century, serving as a regional and statewide model for environmentally friendly, transit-oriented development. Bramson was instrumental in adopting New Rochelle's first-ever sustainability plan, GreenNR, now undergoing a comprehensive update to emphasize resiliency and climate justice. And he has been a champion of open

space expansion, including ongoing efforts to create new parkland on the Echo Bay waterfront and along the “LINC,” a reimagined Memorial Highway.

“I am thrilled to join Sustainable Westchester as its new Executive Director,” Mayor Noam Bramson recently said. “Sustainable Westchester is among the most impactful public interest organizations in our region, with a dedicated, highly-capable staff, a record of meaningful accomplishment, and a vital, growing role in helping localities, the County, and all of New York achieve ambitious climate and environmental goals. It will be a privilege to advance such an important mission, while working alongside colleagues, both in and out of government, whom I respect deeply.”

Of course, we owe a great debt of gratitude to the efforts of Interim Executive Director Jim Kuster, who stepped up to lead our organization with sophistication and passion, and who will remain in place until Mayor Bramson completes his current term in office.

IN THE NEWS

Sustainable Westchester’s announcement that New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson will be taking the reins of the organization beginning in 2024 was widely covered by the media, including a front-page story published by the Westchester County Business Journal. Read the article and more stories below.



[Westchester County Business Journal: What's Next for New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson?](#)

JUNE 5, 2023

Sustainable Westchester, the Mount Kisco-based nonprofit focused on clean energy solutions and environmental justice, has named Bramson to take on the role of executive director once he departs New Rochelle’s City Hall.



[Yonkers Times: New Rochelle Mayor Bramson to Become Sustainable Westchester’s Exec. Director in ‘24](#)

MAY 27, 2023

Sustainable Westchester, the county’s leading climate action advocate and provider of renewable energy, today announced that City of New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson will take the helm of the organization as its next Executive Director effective January 2024.



City and State First Read

MAY 25, 2023

MOVING ON: New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson will take the helm of Sustainable Westchester as its next executive director effective January 2024.



Politico NY Playbook

MAY 26, 2023

Making Moves: Noam Bramson has been named the next executive director of Sustainable Westchester. He currently is the mayor of the city of New Rochelle and will take up the job next January.



Northern Westchester Examiner: Sustainable Westchester Names Bramson Next Executive Director

MAY 30, 2023



Real Estate In-Depth: New Rochelle Mayor Bramson Named Executive Director of Sustainable Westchester

MAY 25, 2023



Inside Press: Sustainable Westchester Names Bramson as its New Executive Director

MAY 25, 2023



New Rochelle Review:
Sustainable
Westchester Names
New Executive
Director

JUNE 8, 2023



Business Council of
Westchester: Mayor
Bramson to Join
Sustainable
Westchester As New
Executive Director in
Jan. 2024

JUNE 1, 2023



Westchester County
Association:
Sustainable
Westchester Names
New Executive
Director

JUNE 8, 2023

Program Updates

Earth Day 2023

This Earth Day, Sustainable Westchester had the honor of participating in events with numerous member municipalities around the County. Local communities in Westchester held well-attended festivals, clean ups, and educational events. We thank them for the opportunity to be involved with these events and look forward to many more.

Sustainable Westchester launched our first comprehensive Earth Month Calendar, featured on our website. We received dozens of submissions and updates from local organizations for events from April and May, serving as the County-wide resource for frequently refreshed event details. We will be making the calendar again next year, so please keep that in mind as you are planning your Earth Month events next year.

Learn more about the wide range of recent activities and programs that Sustainable Westchester led by visiting our website [linked here](#).





Solar

Our Community Solar program has been successful at enrolling individual households in local community solar projects, prioritizing low- to moderate-income households and those residing in state-designated disadvantaged community areas. Our Solar Savings (a.k.a. opt-out community solar) in our opt-out Westchester Power program would provide the benefits of these same monthly savings to larger numbers of low- to moderate-income residents. However, we need approval from the New York Public Service Commission to do so and they have paused any review or approvals since November 2021, not only for Sustainable Westchester, but any other organization and municipality that wants to offer opt-out community solar statewide. In response, Sustainable Westchester has joined a state wide initiative to request the Public Service Commission approve opt-out community solar.

To see who is also advocating for opt-out community solar, visit the Opt-Out CDG Coalition webpage [linked here](#).

EnergySmart Homes

EnergySmart Homes helps residents learn about cleaner ways to heat and cool their homes, access a vetted contractor list and rebate information, and simplify financing. Learn more about insulation, air source heat pumps, geothermal, and heat pump water heaters. Begin with a home energy assessment to diagnose your home energy usage, and then get started on making an investment in your home that will pay off with savings and comfort. Our energy advisors are here to help guide you through the process. Read about homeowner success stories and case studies on our website.



GridRewards

GridRewards is an innovative app powered by Logical Buildings that pays consumers to lower their energy consumption during peak demand periods (sweltering heatwaves in Summer). This year's GridRewards sign-up campaign was the force behind a new sustainability challenge led by the mayors of seven Rivertowns this Earth Day. The mission: to sign up as many residents as possible!

When people work together to reduce their energy usage (nearly effortlessly thanks to the GridRewards app), it alleviates stress on an overworked grid and eliminates the need for costly fossil-fuel Peaker Plants that hurt our environment.

Hastings-On-Hudson won the challenge with an impressive 109 new enrollments! The notable efforts of Dobbs Ferry, Irvington, Ardsley, Tarrytown, Elmsford, and Sleepy Hollow are also worthy of support.

Read more about the mayors' challenge on [our blog](#).

Con Edison-serviced municipalities, businesses, and residents can all participate in GridRewards: [sign up here!](#)

New York State Electric and Gas (NYSEG) customers can join the list to receive a notification when GridRewards is available in your area. Add your name to the list [here](#).

SAVE THE DATE: AUGUST 10

Clean Energy Communities (CEC) 2023 Program Update Meeting

Learn how your municipality can build on previous campaigns to earn additional funds for your community!

Sustainable Westchester and the Hudson Valley Regional Council (HVRC) will walk through recent changes to the CEC program, which include new and additional funding for Clean Heating and Cooling (Heat Pumps), Community Solar and Electric Vehicle Campaigns. Whether you have already done Campaigns or are looking to do one for the first time, there are funding opportunities available.

This program will be held via Zoom.

[Register here to Join.](#)

COMMUNITY CORNER

Get to Know Yasmin Najjar, Building Decarbonization Program Assistant at Sustainable Westchester

Yasmin Najjar began working at Sustainable Westchester as a Clean Energy Associate for Solar Programs in March 2021. In January 2022, she transitioned to a new role as a Climate and Environmental Justice Associate under NYSERDA's Climate Justice Fellowship program and returned as a full-time Building Decarbonization Program Assistant in January 2023. She supports efforts to electrify commercial buildings in Westchester to enhance occupant comfort, improve indoor air quality, and reduce fossil fuel reliance. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Religious Studies from Hunter College and recently obtained a certification in Climate Leadership from Columbia Climate School.



When considering Sustainable Westchester's commitment to environmental justice, it is crucial to highlight the innovative, evidence-based leadership that Yasmin Najjar consistently brings to this work. In the 2.5 years that she's been at Sustainable Westchester, Yasmin has demonstrated a high commitment to environmental justice principles, consistently seeking new opportunities to support and meet communities where they're at in their efforts to be more sustainable.

"Despite Westchester often being perceived as an affluent area, it has the second highest concentration of disadvantaged communities (DACs) in the state, behind only NYC. The data shows that this is connected to a high prevalence of heat-related illnesses and energy burdened-households."

By leveraging geographic information systems (GIS) and census bureau tools, Yasmin conducted outreach to approximately 40,000 low-to-moderate income (LMI) households and small businesses that could access utility savings through the program's offerings. "While mapping and data analysis projects are personally exciting for me, they also help to bring greater credibility to Sustainable Westchester's mission."

Thank you to Sustainable Westchester's Spring 2023 High School Interns! You have demonstrated immense passion for strengthening sustainability in our communities, and we wish you continued success in future endeavors.

Students interested in participating next year, find out more here.



Pictured L to R:

Alaska Fairbanks, Byram Hills High School '23, Duke University '27; Jada Fleiss, Valhalla High School '23, University of Vermont '27; Laura Williams, Fox Lane High School '23, Macalester College '27; Talia London, Briarcliff High School '23, Emory University '27; Molly Levitt, Croton-Harmon High School '23, Washington University in St. Louis '27; and Vienna Ouyang-Christiansen, Byram Hills High School '23, George Washington University '27.

JOIN THE CAUSE, STAY INFORMED

Together, we can take a bold stance on climate action and lead more New Yorkers to transition to renewable energy. Join our mailing list and connect with us on social media to stay informed and learn about opportunities to engage with our mission.

Join our mailing list
Connect on **LinkedIn**

Follow us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#)
Stream with us on [YouTube](#)

SUPPORT OUR MISSION

The fight to address climate change and transition to renewable energy is driven by contributions from municipalities, advocates, supporters, and neighbors like you. Your contributions help us:

- Reach more neighbors
- Educate the public
- Expand our programming
- Devise policy proposals
- Push back against fossil-fuel misinformation

Contribute

ABOUT SUSTAINABLE WESTCHESTER

Sustainable Westchester is Westchester County's leading advocate for community resilience and leading provider of renewable energy. As a nonprofit corporation, Sustainable Westchester is comprised of members that are all local municipalities. The organization is a hub of innovative programs and expertise designed to help local municipalities achieve greenhouse gas reduction targets mandated by New York's landmark Climate Act. Sustainable Westchester strives to improve clean energy solutions, save municipalities and consumers money, and promote environmental justice initiatives within the communities it serves. Its popular and widely utilized programs include Westchester Power; Community Solar; Building Decarbonization for Commercial Properties; Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure; EnergySmart Homes; GridRewards; and Zero Waste.



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Sustainable Westchester is emailing you this information because you are a valued community member. You may have signed up for our newsletter or inquired about one or more of our programs via email, phone call, or at an event.

If you prefer to avoid receiving periodic updates & information from Sustainable Westchester, please opt-out below.

[Opt-Out Here](#)

