

Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Taskforce

Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, January 14, 2026

Attendees

- Cece W.
- Jimmy J.
- Nancy H.
- Jane M.
- Collin H.
- Lori A.
- Bridgett M.

1. Pollinator Garden

- Lori shared that she contacted Cierra (CCE) to request a list of appropriate pollinator-friendly plants.
- Bridgett will create a flyer featuring the plant list and CSC logo for WEC distribution and future social media use.
- The finalized plant list will also be posted on the CSC webpage.
- Janet drafted a press release and will send it to Cece, Bridgett, and Lori for review. The goal is to submit it to the *Thousand Islands Sun* in April.
- Before-and-after photos can be taken at the transfer site.
- Recruitment of volunteers will be encouraged during WEC and Spring Fest.
- Community members will be encouraged to begin pollinator planting at home.

2. Walking School Bus

- Cece spoke with Kelly Picunas and plans to follow up again later this month.
- Cece also contacted Katherine Lake (TIAC) to explore interest in creating a cardboard cutout or visual element to promote the Walking School Bus.
- Nancy suggested connecting directly with the TIAC staff member who oversees after-school arts programming (possibly Nicky Badour). Lori will share the contact information with Cece.
- Nancy noted potential challenges with Fire Department involvement due to its volunteer structure.
 - Lori suggested that Justin Taylor may be able to assist in some capacity.
- The proposed route would include a drop-off point at the playground, followed by a group walk together.

3. Spring Fest

Date: Saturday, May 2, 2026

Time: 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

- The date was moved from May 16 to May 2 to align with the Truck Stop event, which is expected to increase attendance.
- Bridgett will update the current flyer to reflect planned activities.
- Jimmy will explore securing a food truck and/or coffee truck, given the lunchtime timing.
- Arbor Care donated a tree last year; if a donation is not available this year, Jimmy will purchase one.
- Jimmy will reach out to vendors who participated last year.
- Cece noted there are leftover cardboard toilet paper rolls that can be reused for the seedling planting activity.
 - Lori will work on sourcing donated seeds or seedlings.
- Cece will bring free resources and activities again, such as tick kits and the button machine.
- Jane suggested creating a scavenger hunt that encourages attendees to visit vendor tables, with a prize at the end. Jane will begin brainstorming ideas.
- Bridgett will follow up with Mikey and the SAFE Club to see what they plan to do and whether they may be interested in assisting with the scavenger hunt.
- Nancy suggested distributing the Spring Fest flyer in students' Friday folders when appropriate.
 - Bridgett will coordinate with a TILT colleague on this.
- Jimmy suggested reaching out to additional groups to participate as vendors:
 - Dive Club (Jimmy)
 - Rotary Club (Lori)

4. Other Updates

- Cece registered the CSC Taskforce for a table at STR's Winter Environmental Conference (WEC) on January 31, 2026, and will handle setup. Bridgett confirmed she will attend on behalf of TILT and assist with setup, as she did last year.
- Bridgett spoke with a TILT colleague about potential interest from Chaz Rorick, Drinking Water Specialist with NEIWPCC, in presenting on the Drinking Water Source Water Protection Program at an upcoming meeting. Bridgett has contacted Mr. Rorick to inquire about his availability.

Communications Contacts:

- Social Media Updates: Bridgett McCann — bmccann@tilandtrust.org
- CSC Webpage Updates: Amanda Cantwell — deputyclerk@villageofclayton.org

Tree Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes

Attendees

- Cece W.
- Jimmy J.
- Nancy H.
- Jane M.
- Collin H.
- Lori A.
- Bridgett M.
- Tracy B.
- Shirly C.
- Jeremy K.
- Annie M. (virtual)
- Robin H. (virtual)
- Cierra W. (virtual)
- Michael P. (virtual)

Discussion & Action Items

- Shirly shared her collection of historical Clayton postcards that illustrate changes in tree cover over time.
- Tracy noted that reduced tree presence is often linked to increased development.
- Robin suggested starting with a municipal tree inventory, noting that ABM did not complete one as previously believed.
- Lori expressed interest in collaborating with TILT on a tree planting initiative in 2027.
- Cece reviewed CSC action steps that earn points, including creating a local forestry program and conducting a municipal tree inventory reported to the DEC Tree Tracker.
- Robin outlined key considerations for a tree inventory:
 - Location of existing trees (right-of-way vs. private property)
 - Tree age, species, condition, height, and species diversity
 - Recommended reviewing CCE and NYS resources
- Cierra offered to research and compile existing inventory resources.
- Lori stated the committee's goal is to influence where and what trees are planted in the Town/Village, assist residents with planting, and serve as a community resource.
- Cierra suggested contacting DPW or National Grid to better understand safety considerations related to tree placement.
 - Lori will follow up.

- Cierra mentioned the Tree Watertown Committee meets monthly and may be a valuable connection.
 - Lori plans to attend a meeting and invite them to participate in Spring Fest as a vendor.
- Michael emphasized the importance of clarifying the purpose, audience, scale, and intended use of a tree survey before beginning.
- Tracy noted that development planning meetings often lack specificity about tree planting requirements. The committee could serve as a resource for developers, contractors, and landscapers.
- Michael shared that he and Andy Greene recently drafted a tree ordinance for the Town of Orleans and will share the draft with Lori for reference.
 - Cece noted that passing a tree ordinance would earn CSC points (2), though adoption would be up to the Town and Village.
- Cece clarified that while a municipal inventory is required under CSC, expanding efforts to include residents is encouraged.
- Jimmy volunteered to begin an inventory at Cerow Recreation Park and surrounding properties.
- Robin suggested contacting Herb Frost, believed to be the Clayton Arborist, to see if prior inventory work exists.
 - Lori will reach out.
- Jeremy emphasized the importance of zoning inventory areas, especially near power lines, and offered assistance with the inventory and potential tree transplants.
- Tracy suggested referring to the area between the sidewalk and street as the “service strip.”
 - Shirly noted that homeowners typically do not control planting decisions in this area.
- Jane emphasized the need for a long-term plan to ensure newly planted trees are properly maintained.

Upcoming Meetings

Next CSC Taskforce Meeting

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

12:30 PM

Cerow Recreation Park

Next Tree Subcommittee Meeting

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

1:30 PM

Cerow Recreation Park