Claims:

1. A method of processing a substrate, comprising:

positioning a substrate on a substrate support disposed in a process volume of a process chamber;

flowing a process gas comprising a hydrocarbon gas and a diluent gas into the process volume;

maintaining the process volume at a pressure less than about 100 mTorr;

forming a plasma of the process gas by applying a first power to a first electrode of the process chamber and applying a second power to a second electrode of the process chamber, wherein the second power is a pulsed DC power;

maintaining the substrate support at a temperature less than about 350 °C;

exposing a surface of the substrate to the plasma; and

depositing an amorphous carbon layer on the surface of the substrate.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the amorphous carbon layer has a density of more than about 1.8 g/cm^3 and has a Young's modulus of more than about 150 GPa.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the amorphous carbon layer has a film stress of less than about 500 MPa.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the hydrocarbon gas comprises one of CH_4, C_2H_2, C_3H_8, C_4H_{10}, C_2H_4, C_3H_6, C_4H_8, C_5H_{10}, or a combination thereof, and wherein a flowrate ratio of the hydrocarbon gas to the diluent gas is between about 1:10 and about 10:1.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the temperature is less than about 100 °C and the pressure is less than about 20 mTorr.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the diluent gas comprises H_2, and wherein a flowrate ratio of H_2 to the hydrocarbon gas is between about 0.5:1 and about 1:10.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the first power is an RF AC power between about 500 W and 5 kW, with a frequency between about 350 kHz and about 100 MHz, and wherein the second power is between about 200 W and about 15 kW and is pulsed at a frequency of about 1 kHz.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the first electrode is disposed in the substrate support and the second electrode is disposed opposite the substrate support and wherein the second electrode is a showerhead.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the second electrode is disposed in the substrate support and the first electrode is disposed opposite the substrate support.

10. A method of processing a substrate, comprising:

positioning a substrate on a substrate support, the substrate support disposed in a process volume of a process chamber;

flowing a process gas comprising a hydrocarbon gas and a diluent gas into the process volume;

maintaining the process volume at a pressure less than about 20 mTorr;

forming a plasma of the process gas by applying an RF AC power to a first electrode of the process chamber, wherein the RF AC power is between about 500 W and 5 kW with a frequency between about 350 kHz and about 100 MHz and applying a pulsed DC power to a second electrode of the process chamber, wherein the pulsed DC power is between about 200 W and about 15 kW;

maintaining the substrate support at a temperature less than about 100 °C;

exposing a surface of the substrate to the plasma; and

depositing an amorphous carbon layer on the surface of the substrate.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the hydrocarbon gas comprises one of CH_4, C_2H_2, C_3H_8, C_4H_{10}, C_2H_4, C_3H_6, C_4H_8, C_5H_{10}, or a combination thereof.

~~12. The method of claim 11, wherein the diluent gas comprises H_2, and wherein a flowrate ratio of H_2 to the hydrocarbon gas is between about 0.5:1 and about 1:10.~~

~~13. The method of claim 1, wherein the second electrode is disposed in the substrate support and the first electrode is disposed opposite the substrate support.~~

~~14. A carbon hardmask, comprising:~~

~~an amorphous carbon layer disposed on a surface of a substrate, wherein the amorphous carbon layer has a density of more than about 1.8 g/cm^3, a Young's modulus of more than about 150 GPa, and a film stress of less than about 500 MPa.~~

~~15. The carbon hardmask of claim 14, wherein the amorphous carbon layer has a plurality of openings formed therethrough, and wherein each of the each of the plurality of openings have a height to width ratio of more than about 2:1.~~

1. An invention not claimed in any divisional application.