

**MINUTES OF THE CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION MEETING (“CEC”)
MAY 23, 2019
CITY HALL, DALE AVENUE, KYROUZ AUDIDORIUM
(Approved at the meeting of 8/28/19)**

Members Present: Candace Wheeler, Linda Brayton, Debra Darby, Paul McGeary (by phone), John Moskal, Linda Stout-Saunders

Members Absent: Mike Nolan

Staff: Greg Cademartori, Planning Director, Community Development Dept.

Public: Jen Holmgren, City Councilor at Large; Tom Mikus and Bill Tobin, Rockport Green Community Task Force

The meeting was called to order by **Ms. Wheeler** at 7pm.

Roll Call Vote: **Mr. McGeary** joined the meeting by telephone. Commission members voted unanimously by roll call to permit **Mr. McGeary** to participate remotely. Further actions throughout this meeting that required a vote were conducted by formal Roll Call vote.

Approval of Minutes:

November 29, 2018 Minutes which **Ms. Wheeler** has drafted and received comments from **Mr. McGeary** and **Ms. Brayton**; **Ms. Stout-Saunders** stated she would make some clarifications to the section concerning the SMART program and forward those on to **Ms. Wheeler**. Members had no further comments. The CEC unanimously voted to approve by roll call vote the November Minutes subject to the agreed to changes provided to **Ms. Wheeler**.

April 24, 2019 Minutes: Comments from **Ms. Wheeler** and **Ms. Brayton** were accepted. The CEC unanimously voted by roll call to approve the April 2019 Minutes subject to the agreed to changes provided to **Ms. Stout-Saunders**.

Member Reports/Updates/Discussions

Mr. Moskal reported that he had attended an all-day meeting with ISO New England concerning grid transformation and integrating intermittent inverter-based resources -- primarily solar and wind -- and how to achieve that. The Mayor of Boston’s Energy Policy Advisor, Brad Swing, spoke about that city’s efforts relating to microgrids and the barriers that they have run into with regard to establishing them in Boston. (**Mr. Moskal** noted that electric demand will go up if the State goals for countering climate change are met, and the development and costs for cyber security and mitigating vulnerability still need to be determined.

1. Updates from Mr. Cademartori:

- Filling Community Development Senior Planner position: **Mr. Cademartori** explained that it has been challenging; there is not a traditional match of skill sets required for this position. The department is starting interviewing next week from second wave of posting.
- Green Community Grant application for next round has been completed and now awaiting announcement of awards. He noted that there is a gap in maintenance of buildings and understanding of the building energy management systems in order to effectively use them as a tool to distribute and save energy. The systems are in place but not the expertise. Still needed is to provide additional training

for building managers. The goal is to tie everything into one centralized management system at the High School. The biggest simple savings is being on a fixed schedule, i.e. on-off cycle rather than heating/cooling spaces when they are not in use. Projects that have the greatest impact that are included in the grant application include: lighting and fan fixtures in the High School (easy to calculate savings); training; and tying some systems in to the centralized energy management system. The grant request is for approximately \$200,000. Mr. Cademartori noted that the Green Community program is looking toward more matching funds as the program has become more competitive with more cities joining the program. The program is now allowing utility incentives/rebates from other projects to be rolled over when calculating matching funds such as the incentive money earned under the National Grid home energy audit initiative (which this year was comparable to the prior year, approx. \$40,000). In this grant application, the city has included \$50,000 towards matching funds from previous utility incentives.

- Community Electric Aggregation: **Mr. Cademartori** had sent out an email notification of the winter/summer rate change. Good Energy sent a letter to 580 residents that may want to come off or are on another program, so there is the potential to increase enrollment. He noted that the new summer rate is not that far off from the winter rate -- up \$5-10 during the summer months; but on average, over \$50 per household was saved over the winter months so one should focus on a yearly average savings. The Gloucester-CEA site has information and most people that call in to Community Development are directed to Good Energy or Direct Energy if they want to opt out.

- Chamber of Commerce CASE program: **Mr. Cademartori** said the program is fairly autonomous. It's a business- to- business approach with not much city involvement. He said he gets quarterly reports of what has been accomplished.

- National Grid Initiative: The city will decide in December whether to continue with a marketing effort. This year's number of audits was comparable to last year. Energy audits would still be available under the Mass Save program whether or not Gloucester participates in the Initiative.

- Questions for **Mr. Cademartori**:

Ms. Wheeler asked about other large projects in the queue. **Mr. Cademartori** stated that the Vulnerability Assessment was completed 2014-15; then the state's Municipal Vulnerability Program (MVP) was completed. The city now has two planning documents. Efforts have focused on the water supply and management strategy. This has been a year-long effort that should be completed by the end of June. He noted that water quantity is not a concern but that where it is located and how to distribute it is the challenge. Over the next 30-50 years focus will need to be about interconnecting basins. Noted that we already operate under a split system half one location and one the other, each for half of the year.

Ms. Darby asked about the wastewater treatment facility and its location. **Mr. Cademartori** stated that this facility was identified as a priority project. This came out of the 2015 MVP Assessment which revealed that it is a vulnerable area and that last year's winter was a good test. Conceptual ideas of how to fortify the location were in that plan and will be looked at in the near future.

Mr. Cademartori attended the City Council's Budget and Finance meeting earlier this evening and on the Agenda was protection of the High School campus as a priority. Right now, there is an existing and small low grade wall that doesn't do much. GZA Geoenvironmental Engineers have been

contracted to assess various possibilities to protect the campus from flooding which will result in a flood barrier that is up for potential funding.

Mr. McGeary asked about the status of the secondary sewage treatment. **Mr. Moskal** explained that this is still outstanding and explained that secondary sewage treatment is one of the last waivers under 301H of the Clean Water Act and that the EPA does not want any more waivers of this. It will be a negotiation with his office of water (EPA) and the city with regard to permit and a construction/compliance schedule. **Mr. Cademartori** believes the more likely scenario is to protect the current facility and to provide for the space needed for secondary. He believes that site will accommodate it but there are other things that have to happen for that area of the community but there probably is not another viable location.

Ms. Wheeler asked about salt invasion of groundwater due to rising sea levels. **Mr. Cademartori** does not believe that is an issue for our reservoir system. There could be impacts to in some areas of groundwater mounting for septic systems but that has not been fully assessed at this time.

Mr. Prouty inquired if there was a percentage of the time for the Senior Planner position allocated to work with the CEC. **Mr. Cademartori** said no, specific time on a percentage basis is not allocated. **Mr. Prouty** asked about the status of the solar ordinance. **Ms. Stout-Saunders** stated that we were told that this is on hold until the vacant position is filled.

- Maintenance of city websites: **Mr. Cademartori** pointed out that there are dozens of pages on the city website that have become stagnant. It was originally designed to be decentralized and most department staff was trained to maintain and update information. They are looking to perhaps August to have a new platform and an opportunity to revamp all the pages and updating them. He pointed out that the CEC has a page with CEC business activity, such as meeting minutes, ordinances, etc. His question was if the CEC just wants to maintain that page for only CEC business activities. He pointed out Community Development has a Clean Planning page and that the CEC may want to consider collaborating to avoid duplicating information and efforts. Alternatively, there could be a link referenced on the CEC page to the Clean Planning page which is more project oriented. **Ms. Brayton** mentioned that she just posted Turbines 101 to the CEC page. **Ms. Brayton** has access to the CEC page but not the Clean Planning page.

Ms. Brayton asked about the Gloucester Green Facebook page. **Mr. Cademartori** stated that this page was maintained by the Senior Planner position as well. **Ms. Brayton** asked how or if we could have more to do with it. **Mr. Cademartori** stated the challenge is available staff to manage all this and that that the CEC has too many avenues of communication right now (four plus the Gloucester CEA website which is outsourced to Good Energy). He pointed out that **James Pope**, the city's IT director, probably did not anticipated having to maintain further websites outside of the city website. **Ms. Brayton** pointed out that there are other committees and commissions that also have a Facebook page that they keep active such as Clean City and Animal Advisory and **Ms. Holmgren** thought there may be others. **Mr. Cademartori** pointed out there is a separate webpage of Gloucester Green, a Facebook page of Gloucester Green, Clean Energy Planning page and CEC page and that this needs to be made more efficient.

Ms. Darby asked if Gloucester Green could be simplified to just be a Facebook and any information that is on the website could be part of the Facebook profile. **Ms. Brayton** believes that people look at Facebook a lot faster than they look at any of the web pages. **Mr. Cademartori** stated that this should be further discussed with IT in terms of the management and sustainability of all this

and then who manages these all pages. **Mr. Cademartori** noted that **Mr. Pope** would probably be setting up an outreach schedule for this. **Ms. Wheeler** mentioned that in a recent phone meeting with **Ms. Brayton, Mr. Cademartori,** and **Jill Cahill**, Community Development Director, on the Strategic Plan, Ms. Cahill advised that August 16 would probably be the last date for new content to go into the newly reorganized website.

2. CEC Strategic Plan:

Mr. Cademartori and **Jill Cahill**, head of Community Development, have been reviewing the draft Strategic Plan. The CEC wants to confirm that it is consistent with Community Development Department guidelines and clarify the Plan wording about CEC collaborations with outside organizations, such as TownGreen 2025, NGrid, 350.org, Citizens Climate Lobby and other organizations that are doing environmental/climate initiatives. Secondly, CEC would like their thoughts on task assignments.

Mr. Cademartori referred to his email of May 16, 2019 providing initial feedback such as define a timeline, establish priorities, use FY 2020 as time frame and reduce the number of tasks (“list is too long”). He went on to point out that the CEC was formed under the pursuit of Green Communities designation and the work thus far has been around the 20% reduction goal; programs such as electric vehicles, charging stations, municipal aggregation were recommended by the CEC. As example, a task such as carbon sequestration and carbon neutrality do not fit in with the plan adopted by the city. The city is moving in that direction, but there is no specific timeline at the moment.

Mr. Moskal noted that the top five items in the Strategic Plan were tangible with deliverables and the others aspirational, topics of interest to explore. We will reprioritize and make a distinction between long and short term goals.

Concerning CEC Collaboration with third party, non-governmental entities and/or endorsement of energy related programs brought to the attention of the CEC: **Mr. McGeary** and **Mr. Moskal** suggested that the CEC make a presentation to the City Council and inform them of the opportunities that are currently available (including the Big Roof Solar Program as discussed below). The CEC should request further guidance and direction from the City Council and Community Development on how we should address these opportunities as they become available. **Ms. Holmgren** stated that she would welcome an update.

Ms. Darby asked about working with the Gloucester Harbor Community Development Corporation. **Ms. Wheeler** said they could be directed to CASE and that they are probably already getting plenty of outreach from contractors. There really isn’t a role for the CEC.

3. Big Roof Solar Program (“Program”):

Ms. Wheeler first summarized the procurement issue that arose and whether or not the city would have to go out to bid prior to any type of involvement with the Program because it is being facilitated through Resonant Energy. She reached out to MAPC for guidance but has not heard back. **Mr. Cademartori** stated that Jeremy Price looked into the procurement matter and found that some cities had gone through a procurement process and some had not. **Mr. Cademartori** referred to, as example, the ESCO program that the city evaluated but that had gone through a procurement process with MAPC. The Solarize Mass program was also mentioned which went through a state procurement. Ms. Wheeler speculated that perhaps MAPC would do group procurement in the future for a program similar to the Big Roof Solar.

Mr. Cademartori referred to his initial response to the CEC of April 22 wherein he stated that we could go ahead and forward a request to the administration for consideration. He further stated that we should clarify that no staff or administrative time would be required. **Mr. Cademartori** did have a concern about whether this Program will create competition with local installers. **Mr. Prouty** pointed out that Resonant Energy issues an RFP for prospective projects and that local installers would have the opportunity to bid. **Mr. Prouty** stated that TownGreen is continuing to promote the Program but that it would be great to get some sort of endorsement from the City with whatever qualifiers they may deem necessary.

Ms. Brayton reiterated her concerns about fairness; i.e. that other proposals from other organizations and entities be given equal consideration, and CEC has voted on a protocol to ensure this. She said that any proposals, such as this one from Town Green 2025 should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and not be construed as or give the appearance of “partnering” in a more general way. There were no objections to the concept of proceeding on a case-by-case basis.

After much discussion concerning the previous drafts of a letter to the Mayor requesting the City’s endorsement of the Program, the CEC agreed that the tenor of the letter should be revised. Specifically, **Mr. McGeary** will redraft a letter that would simply bring the Program to the attention of both the Mayor and the City Council, and that the CEC recommends their endorsement of the Program. A draft of the letter will be reviewed by the CEC at our next meeting (with a copy sent to Mr. Cademartori) for a formal vote approving the CEC’s support of the Program, the redrafted letter and Ms. Wheeler execution of the letter.

Ms. Holmgren pointed out that a formal endorsement may first be referred by City Council to Planning and Development for review. This led to further discussion of preparing a summary for the City Council of opportunities that the CEC has identified and how these and any future opportunities should be addressed by the CEC so that we know how to move forward on a consistent basis (“we need to know the rules”). The CEC should also ask the City Council what expectations they may have.

Mr. McGeary stated that we should make a presentation to the City Council in parallel with the request for an endorsement of the Big Roof Solar Program. He does not believe one should precede the other.

Ms. Darby asked how soon we could get on the City Council Agenda. **Ms. Holmgren** thought that after the beginning of the next fiscal year would be good timing. She explained that the CEC would need to make a request of the President of the City Council requesting a CEC presentation in order to get on the Consent Agenda.

4. Community Solar: **Mr. McGeary** was happy to report that they “threw the switch yesterday”. The solar panels are now generating electricity for St. John’s Church.

5. Library Project:

Mr. McGeary reported that the Building Committee recommended to the Board of Trustees and the Board of Trustees has approved a plan to renovate the library and add an addition to the rear. The plan includes enhancement in energy conservation including HVAC and solar on the roof (potentially), thermal glass windows and that they are looking to achieve a LEED Gold rating. See Library website for more information. **Ms. Wheeler** asked about parking behind the Monnell building. **Mr. McGeary** said

they need waiver from the state since they estimate going from 40 to 34 spaces. **Mr. Prouty** mentioned that the Green Engineer was looking toward an all-electric building with no gas or oil backup and it's now at about 50-60% electric but that the Library can purchase clean power.

6. Status of Annual Report to the Mayor:

Ms. Wheeler pointed out that the last Annual Report was in 2014. She and **Ms. Brayton** are putting together a list of what we have been working on since then. They are reviewing the agenda of each CEC meeting since the last report. It is intended that the Annual Report, along with the Strategic Plan, be completed by the time the CEC makes a presentation to the City Council.

Guest Comments: Concerning the Big Roof Solar Program, **Mr. Tobin** said that they reviewed it with their Town Administrator whose conclusion was that Rockport out have to go through a formal procurement process. Although they pointed out to the Administrator that the City of Melrose considered Resonant Energy as a sole source per Melrose, that they also have to go through a similar process; that is, the state of Massachusetts procurement laws and regulations that are applicable to sole source contracts.

Next meeting: June 27, 2019

Motion to Adjourn: All members in favor by roll call vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Stout-Saunders