

CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION MEETING NOTES 12/12/13

Members present: Candace Wheeler, Tom Balf, Tom Kiely, Sam Cleaves, Linda Stout-Saunders, John Moskal, Linda Brayton **Staff:** Matt Coogan **Guests:** Joe George, Susanne Altenburger

Meeting notes: Sam Cleaves will submit notes for the September meeting, and Linda S. will submit notes for the October meeting at the next meeting.

Tom Kiely was welcomed as our newly appointed member of the Commission. Matt will add Tom's name and contact information to the list on the CEC web page and make other updates too.

Tom and Candace mentioned that they attended the recent Great Marsh Coalition Forum sponsored by the MAPC, and they found it to be very informative.

Candace reported that she and Linda B. have been organizing previous agendas and minutes to bring the CEC web page up to date, and Matt is in the process of posting them. Since Jill Buchanan, former member and Clerk, left the Commission members have been taking turns taking meeting notes. In order to provide more consistency, Linda B. offered to take notes and see that they are filed and posted on a regular basis until further notice, and members accepted her offer.

Public Comment: Joe George spoke about an idea he has for defraying the cost of school lunches by putting solar on school roofs. This led to a discussion of roof load, and which schools have the capacity for solar. John Moskal spoke about costs and savings; e.g. hybrid models, solar offsets of electricity costs, etc. Many of the potential cost savings on electricity have already been achieved. Tom K. asked if there were precedents for siting renewable energy facilities on municipal buildings. John M. mentioned an example of a co-gen system producing both electricity and hot water at the Tip O'Niell Building in Boston. Members agreed that Joe Taormina, Joe's business colleague, should be invited to attend another CEC meeting next month (Jan. 23, 2014) to make a presentation of about 20 minutes in length. Matt said that the Community Development Dept. is looking at opportunities for solar on school rooftops, where City could sell Renewable Energy Certificates (REC's) from the electricity produced, or lease space to a private developer who could sell the solar electricity. Matt added a caution that Gloucester is close to reaching its net-metering limit. If so, Gloucester could conceivably check to see if any nearby community would like to purchase any excess RECs produced, if there is any appetite for pursuing this.

Meeting times: CEC agreed on the 4th Thursday of each month, 7:30 p.m., as a general meeting time.

Update on streetlight acquisition and conversion project: Matt has been in contact with consultant Steve Weisman of Peregrine, who is up-dating calculations to determine the current cost of streetlights and also processing our application. (In 2009, National Grid had said the acquisition cost for the depreciated streetlight fixtures would be \$0. National Grid will check on whether any upgrades or new fixtures were added since the 2009 inventory, which could result in some acquisition cost). Jim Hafey,

DPW Facilities Manager, contacted EMC, a company that does lighting and has done some of our retrofits, re: installation. EMC approached National Grid about possible LED installation subsidies, and found they will contribute \$200 toward the purchase of each \$600 LED fixture. There are 2,800 fixtures on one of Gloucester's street light accounts and 30 fixtures on the other account. Under consideration: how many lights can be replaced at a time and is there the option of a pilot program. The City would take over ownership and maintenance of only the light fixtures. The poles would stay under National Grid.

Linda S. asked what benefit there is to National Grid in this. Sam said that turning the responsibility for the aging equipment over to the City is a plus for them. For the City there would be light fixture "rental" cost savings, some of which would be applied to a maintenance contract, and some to purchasing LED fixtures. Sam noted that Melrose's annual maintenance cost is about \$50,000 for the 3000 light fixtures it now owns.

Since EMC is a National Grid "preferred vendor" the LED installation contract would not have to go out to bid. We are now "in line" with National Grid, but more communities are interested in purchasing their streetlights now so it is hard to say when our turn will come.

Press release: Tom Daniel wrote a press release, appreciated by all, on the lighting and efficiency projects that have been carried out by DPW, Community Development and the Clean Energy Commission, and the subsequent \$700K in energy and cost savings realized so far. (The article ran in the Gloucester Times on 12/16/13).

Green Communities: Matt told the members that a question had arisen re: the Green Communities report that is due on Monday, the 16th. The data collected on the City's energy savings in FY2012 showed a 15 % savings, but now in FY2013 the savings come in at only at 9%. (The City must reach a goal of 20% usage reduction over 5 years beginning in 2009 when GC status was achieved.) Matt is reviewing the Mass Energy Insight program data to determine what could account for this change. For example, the data hasn't been normalized for weather; some of the variation could be attributed to the Fuller School closing; more refined data collection information since the baseline was established, etc. An especially likely factor – with major renovations, the City is more energy efficient with its water and sewer plants now, but the transitional period may have caused a spike in electricity use. Also, some of the facilities may have been off-line in 2009, resulting in an artificially low electricity usage figure in the Green Communities baseline. Matt will talk with representatives of Veolia Environmental Services, the company hired to do the sewer/water work.

The good news is that the energy saving projects just finished will be counted in next year's calculations (FY 14), and that Variable Frequency Drives (VFD's) will soon be installed in some City facilities, further adding to the FY 14 energy savings. It was mentioned that when West Parish School closes, there will be a decrease in electricity usage, possibly offset by the electricity usage of the interim school building. Linda S. noted that a building shutdown should not count toward Green Community energy savings. She and Matt will confer about the Green Com. Baseline approach and how to factor in both cuts and increases in energy usage due to changes in building usage. Also, Green Communities recently sent out

an RFI (to which Matt and Linda B. sent individual responses) re: new GC guidelines. *In* some circumstances there could be the flexibility of a 6th year in which to reach the 20% goal.

Matt will circulate the FY2012 and FY 2013 reports when they are available.

DOER Energy Manager Grant Program: DOER grant funding for Energy Manager staffing has become available with a February application deadline date. Matt reported that Tom Daniel thinks that this would be something to pursue. The extra staff time could potentially be used by Community Development, DPW and/or the Building Department. The grant is structured as an incentive to increase energy management staffing, providing \$50K the first year, \$20K the second year, and \$0 thereafter. Sam said that CEC has played a role in grant applications before, and members could offer any assistance that might be needed.

Mass Energy Consumers Alliance: Candace reported that she has been contacted by Mass Energy (whose Executive Director is Larry Chretien) re: the potential for their assistance with increasing the use of renewable energy in Gloucester. The organization acts as a sort of REC broker, according to Candace, by buying and selling Renewable Energy Certificates, as they do, for example, with the EIP/ Gloucester Engineering wind turbine energy production. They would like to come to our next meeting, and the Commission decided to invite them for a 20 minute or so presentation at our February meeting to clarify what they are proposing. John pointed out that CEC doesn't endorse any particular vendors or organizations, but can invite presentations by groups such as Mass Energy for informational purposes.

Natural gas service extension: John is in the process of obtaining Department of Public Utilities (DPU) maps and other information to determine the feasibility of extending natural gas lines to unserved and underserved parts of Gloucester and approaching National Grid if this seems warranted. The City could start identifying areas through which a natural gas line extension could run.

Guest Joe George, brought up the possibility of installing fuel cells in strategic locations, and John spoke about some of the pros and cons. (Fuel cells are like small power plants that convert natural gas into electricity and hot water through a chemical reaction, rather than by combustion. The Coast Guard Station on Cape Cod uses fuel cells, and there are many in use in Connecticut.) In sum, in the areas that are underserved in Gloucester, the customers are spread out, and fuel cells would be of more benefit where there is a concentration of consistent commercial or large industrial use.; e.g. the hospital or Market Basket.

On-going and new items:

- Endicott College student intern: It is not clear at this point what role there might be for a student intern. Tom B. said that if CEC and Community Development Dept. do decide to seek out an intern, he highly recommends contacting Sarah Hammond Creighton at Endicott, as she is specifically involved with renewable energy projects and is highly regarded for her work.
- Candace is working on CEC's annual report to the Mayor and City Council and is also finishing up the report on Municipal Energy Aggregation. Tom K. volunteered to assist with the annual reports, as a good way to become more familiar with CEC's work.

- Community Development Clean Energy Planning web page/ CEC web page: There was further discussion of Candace and Linda B. and Matt's work on up-dating these web pages (in addition to the posting of minutes and agendas.) Linda read a list of possible links to documents and other sites for consideration and asked for any suggested additions or subtractions. Members agreed to the outline so far, and added a few ideas, such as a link to the March 2013 "Turbines 101" presentation by the City at the Library. When the web pages are developed further, Candace, Linda and Matt will update.
- Sam reiterated the priorities CEC has agreed to pursue: streetlights, grants for DPW work (with Matt and intern), possible extension of gas lines, and update of the strategic plan.
- Relative to community outreach, Candace will contact Ani Krishnan at MAPC about ways that other communities have reached out to residents and businesses on energy conservation and renewable energy opportunities for them.
- The next Solarize Mass grant round is a program members would like to consider seriously. It would be a renewable energy project and also serve as public outreach and education
- Stretch code – State's base code is being updated and so stretch code may be too.
- Building Inspector is using the thermal imaging camera purchased with GC funds but is short staffed and so can't use it as often as he would like. Matt will invite him to our next meeting.
- Tom Balf stated that Maritime Gloucester will be holding an event on Climate Change in March, and CEC might want to play a part in this.
- Sam explained issues arising around the new preliminary National Flood Plains maps and flood insurance maps. There has been a big increase in land subject to flooding, which coincides with a big increase in flood insurance premiums, as the Federal government tries to adjust the Program so it doesn't subsidize property owners in high risk locations, especially owners of second homes on shorelines. U.S. Rep. Tierney is working on legislation to resolve problems around data; e.g delay for 2 years to check methodology, examine fairness of building practices. Storm records show storms are more frequent and more intense. Mass. State Building Code will be impacted.
- Susanne wished to speak after all about her green boat prototype and vision. Linda S., Tom B. and Linda B. all questioned exactly what it is that is being asked of the CEC especially given the Commission's mission parameters per the City's Code of Ordinances and lack of funding ability. Susanne will return to CEC in February to give a 20 minute presentation to clarify her proposal.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Next meeting: January 23, 2014, 7:30 p.m. City Hall Annex.

Respectfully submitted, Linda Brayton