

Clean Energy Commission Meeting Notes, April 16, 2014
(Approved as amended at May 22, 2014 meeting)

Members Present: Candace Wheeler, John Moskal, Linda Brayton, Linda Stout-Saunders, Tom Balf, Tom Kiely; **Staff Member:** Matt Coogan

The meeting was called to order at 7:33PM by Candace Wheeler, Chair. The meeting notes of 3/27/14 were unanimously approved. It was noted that the City Clerk needs a separate copy of CEC meeting minutes for City records. Candace Wheeler will ensure that she gets these minutes and any previous she may lack. Matt Coogan also receives copies of the minutes for posting on the CEC webpage. Linda B. commented that the protocol now is that the approved (amended if necessary) minutes are emailed to both the City Clerk and Matt as pdfs and the date the minutes were approved are noted under the title. Also, members will now be cc'd on the same email so that everyone has copies of the minutes with any amendments or corrections included. The next meeting will be May 22.

Invitation to Public Comment: None

Green Communities Program updates and reports: National Grid has assessed that there is enough pressure in the Cherry Street pipeline to run a gas line to the O'Maley School. Among municipal buildings, the O'Maley School is the second largest consumer of energy, so reducing energy use here will have high net impact on energy efficiency for the city. The school is also the highest carbon emitter among city buildings. Application for the next round of Green Community Program funding (due on April 18) will ask for \$250,000 to apply toward conversion of the school's boilers from oil to gas, including replacement of the three boilers which will provide 96% efficiency. (The existing boilers are 42 years old, and run at 82% efficiency). An architect and engineer hired by the City evaluated the project and performed a cost and savings analysis in addition to a B2Q Audit. Conservatively, the conversion to gas (less costly than oil) and the installation of more efficient boilers (the existing boilers cannot be re-tooled for gas) will result in a 15% reduction in energy use at the school saving Gloucester \$120,000 in energy costs annually. The total cost of the conversion project will be \$700,000, approximately \$250K to be paid with grant funds and the balance to be paid with City Capital Improvement funds. Given the reduced energy costs, the payback on the investment will be 3.5 years. The goal is to complete the project before October 1, which is the beginning of the new heating season. John Moskal noted that the City should get the project on National Grid's (Mr. LeBrecque's) calendar as soon as we know that we have been awarded the Green Communities grant money.

Commission members asked if National Grid offered financial incentives for the conversion, and Matt Coogan will check. John Moskal suggested that these incentive programs may be a thing of the past. Given the widening price difference between gas and more costly oil, there is less need for the utility to stimulate interest in conversion.

Green Communities Goal: Reducing energy usage at the O'Maley School by 15% represents a 2% reduction in total energy usage for the city. Thus, this is a significant contribution to efforts to meet the Green Community goal of 20% overall municipal energy reduction between 2009-2014. Commission members discussed the need for more distinction in understanding of absolute consumption numbers and how the city is tracking against targets. For instance, it was noted that since 2009 (the baseline year against which energy reductions will be measured) improvements have been made in the City's ability to access data about energy consumption more accurately. Some gaps that existed in available data in 2009 can now be accessed and checked. In 2009, the

water treatment plant lacked the investments made when Veolia later took over management of the system, and for part of that year some of the system was shut down. What, therefore, is the accurate way to measure baseline consumption in energy used in water and waste treatment? Matt Coogan is working with Veolia to gain specific information. The 2009 energy use baseline was reported using the EPA's "Portfolio Manager" methodology. Linda Saunders noted that many ESCO projects are now using the Mass. Energy Insight methodology to report energy savings to DOER. She said there is a Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) methodology which calculates the energy consumption before and after the specific energy conservation measure. The resulting energy savings is reported as a "fixed achievement", separate from the overall energy consumption of the building which can change over time due to changes in the use of the building. In this way, the project savings is not lost by the offsetting effects of later increases in energy consumption due to unrelated use changes. We should think about how this approach might apply as we try to document our progress toward the 20% Green Communities goal.

Street Lighting Update: We are still awaiting a response from National Grid. They have a 60-day window to respond to our request to purchase the streetlight fixtures. Matt Coogan noted that MAPC is establishing a "request for quote" (RFQ) process and selection committee to secure an energy management service vendor for street lighting maintenance for multiple communities, to consolidate activities and save costs. (This is the second time such an RFQ has been done, and there are 10 communities in this round). Matt will serve on the selection committee. It may be useful for Gloucester to be involved too, and we will monitor progress while awaiting a response from National Grid. The RFQ will be awarded in July. Purchase of LED lights is something CEC may consider once the streetlights are owned by the City. It might be possible to apply for funding for this in the next round of Green Communities funding. Potential savings come from both highly efficient LED bulbs and automated scheduling of when lights turn on and off, and controllable levels of brightness.

Exploring the potential for gas line extensions, update: There is no additional information at this time beyond the discussion at the March CEC meeting. (See March 27 CEC meeting notes.) John Moskal reports that James Hafey is checking to see if National Grid provided Gloucester Department of Public Works with a detailed map of current gas lines.

Coastal Zone Management Grant: Gloucester won a \$50,000 Coastal Zone Management Grant. The grant will allow the city to conduct a mapping exercise to estimate how sea level rise might impact the city and shed light on potential municipal vulnerabilities and risks. Matt Coogan reports that the City is in the process of bidding out the exercise. The grant (and the goal of the exercise) is intended to help local governments to understand how to continue to provide essential services in the face of more extreme weather-related events. John Moskal urged that, for Gloucester, the assessment particularly pay attention developing overlay maps showing infrastructure such as water pipes (drinking water and waste water), gas lines, and power plants. Matt also noted that the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources will also soon begin to make funding available for municipalities to better assess coastal resiliency. Members stated a desire to study the potential for Gloucester to develop a proposal for one of these grants. Tom Balf mentioned that on May 14, Maritime Gloucester will host a workshop on the impact of climate change on coastal areas. It is an educational event, free to the public, and will be held at the Rose Baker Senior Center. Several organizations across Cape Ann including the CEC are participating in organizing and/or promoting attendance. Members expressed interest in finding ways for the CEC to stimulate more community outreach on this topic.

Solar Energy, discussion: Tom Balf and Matt Coogan attended a workshop on solar energy moderated by Tim Sanborn, from Cazeault Roofing, held at the Building Center on [date]. Both reported that the workshop—intended for local contractors—was informative. Matt reported that Tim Sanborn has also reached out to Community Development to learn about Gloucester’s level of interest in solar energy. Cazeault Roofing is a contractor for residential solar installations. Commission members suggested he be invited to the June CEC meeting to discuss his view of the current state of the residential solar sector.

Members voiced considerable interest in better understanding the potential for community solar. As John Moskal noted, municipal facilities are nearing renewable energy net metering capacity (due to the City’s wind energy agreement). But municipal buildings could, in principle, lease roof space to vendors providing solar energy to adjacent communities, such as Essex or Rockport. Matt Coogan will check on legalities and practicalities for such arrangement. If the City leased municipal space for a private solar project, it would be up to the solar vendor to locate credit-worthy customers for their solar energy prior to investing in a project.

The “cap” on renewable energy for municipal use in Gloucester (a state-mandated limitation) does not apply to commercial and residential electricity consumers in the city. Residential and commercial buildings account for 90% of the community’s overall electricity use. One challenge to adoption of solar energy in Gloucester is the average age of the housing stock. Older buildings typically can’t accommodate (without structural work) the weight of solar infrastructure; solar equipment is usually an option for newer buildings. So better understanding options within the context of Gloucester’s housing stock is of considerable interest to members.

Separately, Matt Coogan has been exploring what might be entailed to conduct a solar feasibility study in Gloucester. It was noted that Cambridge did a solar feasibility study for the entire City, based on building orientation and tree cover. Tom Balf asked if grants might be available to host an exposition/community education forum on solar energy, and Matt is checking.

Additional or On-going Items: Candace reported that she delivered to the Mayor a copy of the CEC’s letter urging consideration of adding resources to the Building Inspector’s office to support oversight of construction “stretch” codes adopted by the City as part of its Green Communities commitment.

Candace reported that Mass Energy Consumers Alliance (MECA), which sells renewable energy credits (REC) generated by the wind turbines, is also interested in talking with the CEC about RECs and the Gloucester Community. Members voiced some concern about drawing clear lines between assisting a particular business or vendor to do outreach (which, by mandate, we must eschew) and public education. A decision on hearing MECA’s presentation was tabled.

Candace will contact Dan Hubbard, U.S. Coastguard, to speak at the 5/22/14 CEC meeting. He will be speaking about tidal energy generation in our region.

Candace and Tom K. reported that draft CEC annual reports for 2012 and 2013 are nearly complete or in process. A question was raised: is the CEC required, under City ordinance, to conduct an “annual report presentation” before City Council? Candace and Linda B. will check on specific language and requirements.

Action Items:

- Candace will invite Tim Sanborn to a CEC meeting to discuss residential solar

- Candace – work with City Clerk’s office to ensure that all meeting notes and agendas are on file and notify Matt of any items that need to be posted on the CEC webpage.
- John (with Matt and Jim Hafey) will obtain, if possible, National Grid gas line maps, and check for NGrid incentives for extended gas lines and conversions to gas.
- Matt will check on legalities and practicalities of renting municipal space for solar to other communities.
- Matt is checking on what might be entailed to conduct a solar feasibility study in Gloucester.
- Matt will check to see if there are funds available to host an exposition/community education forum on solar energy.
- Tom B. will review the CEC strategic plan with an eye toward an update.
- Tom K. will meet with Linda B. and Candace W. to assess updating the CEC website and enhancing outreach to the community via the web site.
- Tom K., Candace and Linda B. will work on Annual Reports.
- Matt – check CO2 reduction for O’Maley School

The meeting adjourned at 9:10PM. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 22 at 7:30PM. Location is to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Kiely