

Minutes of the meeting
of the Gloucester Clean Energy Commission
Tuesday, June 18, 2019
City Hall, Dale Avenue, 1st floor conference room
(Approved at meeting of 7/25/19)

Attending: Commissioners: **Candace Wheeler**, chair, **Debra Darby**, **Linda Stout Saunders**, **Linda Brayton**, **John Moskal**, **Paul McGeary**, vice-chair.
Public: **Dick Prouty**

Ms. Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Approval of prior meeting minutes

Approval of the meeting minutes of May 23 was deferred until our next meeting.

Member reports on conferences, meetings, etc.

Coastal resiliency meeting: **Ms. Brayton** reported that she had attended a meeting on coastal resilience in light of climate change and rising sea levels. The meeting was held at Gloucester High School. She reported that a new steel seawall from the Done Fudgin' boat ramp to the Blynman Bridge on the Annisquam River had been proposed as a result of a recent study funded by a \$63,000 grant from the state. She said the City is pursuing funding for the wall's construction.

Citizens group being formed to act on climate change: **Ms. Wheeler** reported on the formation of a citizen's group to take action in the face of rapid climate change. She said the group was being led by **Courtney Hayes and Mark Nelson** and hoped to have an initial meeting in September to coincide with International Climate Week on Sept. 25. **Mr. Prouty** reported that the organizers meet on Thursdays at noon at Magna on Pleasant Street and that his group, TownGreen 2025 was working with them. **Ms. Darby** noted that there will be additional climate events as part of Global Climate Week (the week of Oct. 14, 2019).

Working with the EDIC: **Ms. Wheeler** said that she had received a communication from **Jerry Oppenheim** of the city's Economic Development and Industrial Corporation asking if the Commission would like to submit posts for a blog that the corporation is setting up. **Ms. Wheeler and Ms. Stout-Saunders** agreed to take the lead on fulfilling the request.

Inquiry on uses of power from the city's wind turbines: **Ms. Stout-Saunders** reported an inquiry from former commissioner **Bob Myers** as to whether electricity produced by the two wind turbines for which the City is the net metering customer could be used to power electric buses. It was noted that the power generated goes to the City and that the Cape Ann Transportation Authority is an independent authority. Further, **Mr. Moskal** noted that the City's agreement with Equity Industrial Turbines does not allow for earmarking the power produced for specific purposes.

Vacancies to be filled

Ms. Wheeler informed the commission that Commissioner **Mike Nolan** was stepping down because his job has become more demanding and he feels he cannot devote the requisite amount of time to commission work. She asked that commissioners forward to her any recommendations for a candidate to fill the vacancy.

Ms. Wheeler also informed the commission that the Community Development Department was in the final stages of selecting a candidate to replace Jeremy Price as the department's liaison to the commission.

Strategic plan and multi-year report

Ms. Wheeler and Ms. Brayton reported that they have held a number of working sessions on 1) the draft Strategic Plan and 2) a comprehensive report covering the activities and accomplishments of the CEC from 2015 through 2018.

The Strategic Plan is being reorganized to better arrange the 21 action items and goals already agreed upon by the CEC. Ms. Wheeler and Ms. Brayton took part in a conference call with Ms. Cahill, and Mr. Cademartori to seek their guidance, and Mr. Cademartori also attended the CEC meeting in May and provided his input. The goal is to present the 21 items in an easier to read format and to incorporate their suggestions; e.g. arrange in categories, include time frames and to avoid making commitments that require agreement from other entities. The commission decided to circulate the current versions of its both strategic plan and annual report covering 2015-2018 among the members for discussion at our next meeting in July. **Ms. Brayton** noted her objections to this approach, saying that the documents were not sufficiently ready for comments and that circulating them prematurely would be a more time consuming and confusing process. This would be especially true if, as suggested, members made changes concurrently via email, given the Open Meeting Law constraints re: deliberating in emails.

She also explained that there is a deadline of Aug. 16 to get all materials posted on the CEC page if they are to be considered for inclusion on the up-coming newly restructured City website.

Since there is only one more CEC meeting prior to that date she cautioned that given this change in the review process neither document would likely be ready in time for this deadline.

Draft letter of support for energy efficiency initiative

A discussion was held of a draft letter prepared by **Mr. McGeary** recommending that the commission, the office of the Mayor and the City Council endorse the current "Big Roof" solar program for small businesses and non-profits with the understanding that the city not be an official "partner" in the enterprise. **Ms. Brayton** asked that the letter include relevant sections of the minutes of the commission's May 23 meeting once they are approved, to indicate the commission's view on what role it might or might not play in partnering with non-governmental

agencies and organizations and also seeking guidance from the Administration and the Council as to what role the Commission might play in such activities.

Ms. Wheeler said she had had several discussions on this topic with Planning Director **Gregg Cademartori** and Community Development Director **Jill Cahill**.

She also circulated an email to CEC members plus Dick Prouty and Susan Hoague of Town Green 2025 on June 17 in advance of the discussion at this meeting: a cover letter of a draft letter by Mr. McGeary addressed to the mayor and City Council for discussion and review.

A few changes were made to the draft; especially eliminating language referring to CEC's playing a role in implementation of the project. **Ms. Brayton** read out the sections of **Ms. Wheeler's** cover letter with extensive clarifying language as to what an endorsement would entail. She asked that that this language be included in the minutes, **Mr. McGeary** said that these conditions were covered at the May 23, 2019 CEC meeting and should be in the minutes (not yet available.)

On a motion by Mr. Moskal, seconded by **Mr. McGeary** the commission voted six in favor, none opposed to send a letter seeking the city's possible endorsement for the current "Big Roof" solar program and asking for guidance on its proper role in joint projects to the Mayor and the Council and further that the letter should include the relevant passages from the minutes of the commission's meeting of May 23 once they are approved.

Community Solar

Mr. McGeary told the commission that the solar project at St. John's Episcopal Church had gone live, and is producing electricity consistent with the project specifications, and is supplying 40percent of the electricity usage for the whole complex. He reported that a meeting was being held the following evening at the church to update potential participants in the Big Roof solar program currently under way. **Mr. McGeary** said that 20 people had responded to the invitation for the meeting, including Wellspring, Gloucester Maritime, Geoffrey Richon, Bombco, and Cape Ann Bank and Trust. The new YMCA is also interested. He said the church installation would serve as a model for other small businesses and non-profits. It was noted that California now requires all new development to be solar-ready or be equipped with solar panels, but in Massachusetts, we still rely on the initiative of the building owner, encouraged by incentives.

Mr. Prouty reported on the status of Town Green 2025's progress in developing a list of between 5-10 prospects (churches, small businesses, non-profits) for this program. (This list had been requested by the Community Development Department, according to Jeremy Price, Project Manager, when the big Solar Roof project proposal was presented to the CEC. This would be needed in order to assess viability before going any further in making decisions re: any City involvement.)

Mr. Prouty said that about 20 non-profits were expected to attend the event at St. John's the next night. He handed out flyers as FYIs and said a notice was also posted on Facebook a day or two earlier.

Other discussion

Ms. Brayton informed the commission of an article in the June 5 issue of the Gloucester Daily Times in which the Speaker of the Massachusetts House, **Robert DeLeo**, indicated that significant funds would be available to help cities and towns prepare and adapt to rapid climate change and sea level rise. She suggested the commissioners be on the lookout for opportunities to tap into state resources to help Gloucester cope with the challenges posed by climate change and sea level rise.

Adjournment

On a motion by **Mr. Moskal**, seconded by **Ms. Wheeler** the commission voted six in favor, none opposed to adjourn at 8:45 p.m.

Next meeting

The commission set its next meeting for Thursday, July 25, at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul McGeary, vice-chair.