

MINUTES OF CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION
March 10, 2021, 7:30 PM
Remote meeting
(Approved at meeting of 7/22/21)

This meeting was conducted remotely through ZOOM. All votes conducted by Roll Call.

Members Present: Linda Brayton, Debra Darby, John Moskal, Linda Stout-Saunders, Candace Wheeler, Sam Ziergiebel

Staff: Gregg Cademartori, Community Development

Guests: Jen Holmgren, City Councilor at Large; Amanda Nash, 350.org; Tom Mikus, Rockport Green Community Task Force

Ms. Wheeler proposed that approval of any outstanding Minutes will be delayed until the next CEC meeting. Ms. Saunders mentioned that she will re-circulate the Minutes of November 2019.

No Member Reports are being presented since it has been over a year since the last CEC meeting.

Staff Report:

Mr. Cademartori addressed the following Agenda items:

b) Status of hiring for Senior Planner/Energy Program Manager: Community Development has been conducting a search and he hopes to have more definitive information for the next CEC meeting.

Mr. Cademartori provided his power point presentation addressing the following:

Community Electricity Aggregation (CEA): we are in year three of our three year contract with Good Energy ending December 2021. All information concerning the program performance including rates and savings is available at Gloucester-CEA.com. Average annual savings per household has been \$133. Enrollment has remained fairly stable. Ms. Brayton pointed out that the CEA site provides a calculator for individuals to calculate their usage and savings.

Mr. Moskal asked if changes in enrollment are due to changes in real estate transaction but pointed out it does appear to have remained stable. Greg suggests that would be a question for Good Energy.

Ms. Wheeler discussed potential for a regional aggregation contract. This could be two communities, several or even over 20 (as example on the South Shore) communities. MAPC assisted Gloucester in obtaining a technical assistance grant to support the ongoing discussion of a regional aggregation program. Approx. 20 communities have expressed an interest. This one-year assistance grant has run out and MAPC has offered to assist in obtaining another grant. MAPC will advise by the end of the month. In the meantime, we have a list of interested communities to continue discussions with.

Ms. Brayton thoughts are to continue with our own program and avoid processing the program thru DPU and that it may not be advantageous to us right now considering the timing.

Mr. Cademartori will follow up with Donna Compton to determine what the procurement process is for contract renewal or extension. It was concurred that more community outreach would also be helpful. Ms. Holmgren commented that she would advocate for the program. Ms. Wheeler will invite Good Energy to attend the next CEC meeting to go over the pros and cons of regional collaboration and contract renewal process.

Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation and Resilience

Green Communities- Last grant was to compete a LED lighting retrofit and EMS expansion at the High School. Annual reporting has been submitted. Funding under the program has been dimensioned as exemplified \$100K funding caps and greater matching funds. We will not be eligible to apply for this next round of funding but we do have some funds available from National Grid programs. DPW and Community Development will meet with NGrid to look into opportunities such as continued on-bill financing projects and demand response programs.

Charging Stations: the City received a grant last year but will not be pursuing installation at this time due to limited resources. Separately the private sector is becoming more active such as Tesla proposing installation of charging stations at Gloucester Crossing.

Infrastructure/Climate Change: A few years ago grant was given for a Municipal Vulnerability Program (MVP) which included a study of the vulnerability of our pump stations and how to prepare them for potential flooding conditions. As a result, several stations are being rehabbed in the Good Harbor and Wheelers point areas.

Last Summer the City obtained a \$3.5M EPA grant for a flood mitigation project at the waste water treatment plant which is considered critical due to its location in a flood plain and the fact that we only have one plant. Construction should be commencing later this Spring/early Summer. A flood mitigation plan for the high school campus has been done but we are waiting to determine availability of grants to mitigate the cost.

Planning:

Integrating open space and recreation plans with the resiliency and vulnerability studies. MAPC is continuing to support this effort albeit slowly due to staffing issues.

Essex County Greenbelt has provided Cape Ann community's specialized data with regard to resiliency priorities.

Prior to Covid, thru a MVP grant, we conducted a watershed and supply assessment for our water supply, reservoir system and distribution, and how to protect and preserve watershed lands. This Spring we are working with Coastal Zone Management looking at resiliency strategies for DPA (designated port area) properties and what the challenges and opportunities may be. This will feed into the City's Harbor Planning process. An RFP has been issued for consulting services.

Policy Perspective: With assistance from MAPC working on a flood plain management ordinance for housing and determining high risk areas. The ordinance we have now is out of date.

Solar Ordinance: Suggested that the CEC identify the need for large scale solar, potential sites and economic benefits. Ms. Wheeler has been contacted by Soltec Energy and suggests that the CEC have them make a presentation to identify programs and opportunities available. We also need to determine limitations under the City wind turbine contract and the amount of capacity available. Mr. Cademartori pointed out that most of the City accounts are under the turbine contract in addition to the City's obligation under the CEA and that we do not have the ability to enter into another net metering contract.

City's current clean energy priorities and where CEC can best provide support: Ms. Wheeler has been contacted by Honeywell Inc. expressing their interest in doing performance contracting for municipal and school energy efficiency projects. Approximately 10 years ago the City participated in a MAPC competitive bid procurement for such services (about a dozen communities participated) under which Ameresco was awarded the work. After Ameresco's preliminary energy audit of Gloucester's facilities and review by both the DPW and City Administration, it was determined that Gloucester would not participate and rather, continue working with Siemens and EMC as project needs arose and in conjunction with the Green Communities program Mr. Cademartori will follow up with DPW director Mike Hale to determine if at this time Gloucester would have an interest and/or need for energy performance contracting for long term planning and outsourcing. The CEC will then follow up at a future meeting.

CPACE: the City Council adopted a resolution to participate in the Massachusetts Commercial PACE financing program for energy efficiency improvements that is being administer through Mass Development Finance Agency. In an August 2020 telephone conference with Mass Development, Community Development, some CEC members and Councilor Cox it was suggested that Mass Development would make a presentation to the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce (and possibly the Economic Development and Industrial Corp. committee). Due to ongoing Covid related matters the timing of a presentation has been delayed. It was suggested that perhaps later this Summer may be appropriate. Mr. Cademartori will follow up with Sal DiStefano and Tom Balf to determine a level of interest and availability. The CEC will discuss what our future roll will be under the program. Ms. Stout-Saunders has reached out to Mass Development who indicated they are willing to make a presentation upon our request.

Item 4 of Agenda: Cape Ann Climate Coalition for City support of Net Zero Stretch Building Code legislation (Mass. Legislation). Ms. Wheeler posed the question of whether Gloucester should sign on to support this legislation. Ms. Brayton summarized that this legislation is part to the omnibus climate bill which Governor Baker returned to the Legislature with amendments including the Net Zero Stretch Building Code. Amanda Nash of 350.org has circulated a letter addressed to the Governor urging support of the Net Zero Stretch Code and asked if the Clean Energy Commission or any of its members would be willing to sign off. After inquiries with the City Clerk's and Mayor's offices,, Ms. Brayton stated that Board, Commission and Committee members cannot sign endorsement in their official capacity nor as an entity as a whole. Councilor Holmgren also received this letter and has reached out to the City Council. Ms. Brayton's thought is that this could be presented as a "For Council Vote". Mr. Cademartori believes further evaluation of the existing Stretch Code and this proposed Net Zero Stretch Code is warranted; specifically, how it affects the housing industry economics.

Ms. Wheeler asked if a roll call vote to support this initiative could be made this evening. Members agreed that further evaluation is needed.

This matter will be addressed at a next month's CEC meeting. Members may, however, endorse this legislation as private citizens.

Amanda Nash: commented (through Ms. Holmgren) that it's likely that the Net Zero Stretch Code will be concluded within the week; that the Governor has already returned the Bill to the Legislature and it would be up to them to override. Thus this could be a moot issue.

Item 3. Status of Future Act: Ms. Brayton reported that as of November 2020 it was moved to the next session in January 2021. As a result, at this time no immediate action on our part is needed.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 31, 2021 at 5PM by Zoom call. Primary agenda items are Community Electricity Aggregation and Community Development staffing.

Motion to Adjourn: the meeting was adjourned at 9:40pm by roll call. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted

Linda Stout-Saunders