

MINUTES OF CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION
October 14, 2021, 5:00 PM
(Approved at meeting of April 14, 2022)

This meeting was conducted remotely through ZOOM. All votes were conducted by roll call.

A full recording of this meeting is available at: <https://www.gloucester-ma.gov/1179/October-2021-Past-Meetings>

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

Staff: Gregg Cademartori, Gemma Wilkens of Community Development

Guests: Van Du, Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC); Valerie Nelson, TownGreen 2025 and Greg Federspiel, Town Administrator, Manchester, MA

Minutes Unanimously Approved: March 31, 2021, June 23, 2021, and July 22, 2021v-2

Community Development Update

“BRIC Grant”: Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities facilitated by FEMA for a wide array of infrastructure projects. Although the City applied, sea wall grants administered by the State turned out to be more advantageous and we secured funding for the High School sea wall (flood barrier). An application for the Haskell Dam projected has been refined and is being resubmitted.

Green Communities Grant Application: Assessments performed over the summer with DPW. Have been working with National Grid rep to maximize incentives (mechanical control systems and lighting projects and other options for several facilities). Approximate incentive amount from National Grid is \$64,000 (added to the Grant will equal almost the full cost of the projects). The Green Communities’ driver is cost per kWh saved and how it impacts our overall reduction strategy. We hope to be eligible for the next round of incentives as well.

CARP Intern Hiring: We are in the process of seeking candidates. Two job descriptions have been posted, one for a High School age and one for a College age candidate. This is budgeted as part of the CARP grant specific to community engagement.

Member Reports

Electric School Buses: Ms. Stout-Saunders asked that this be placed on the next CEC meeting Agenda. to summarize the benefits to the City. Mr. Cademartori has not received anything concerning this from the Schools. Ms. Wheeler stated that a TownGreen2025 group has met with the school committee.

Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP) update by Van Du, MAPC

1. Commenced discussion of data collection and existing data to put together the greenhouse gas inventory phase.
2. Stakeholder Assessment: identify key groups and individuals. Up to 10 external and internal stakeholders is the goal. Stakeholder engagement is to determine level of awareness, expectations, goals, and strategies.

3. November 17th at 6pm will be the first community workshop (by Zoom) to do a visioning session with the public, the CEC and MAPC. This is a brainstorming session to determine the community's priorities as we move forward with planning. Van Du summarized that this first meeting will be an initial introduction including a timeline and opportunities. All from the community are welcome to attend. More details to follow over the next couple weeks including how to promote this workshop within the community. Ms. Van Du clarified that the Stakeholder assessment is separate from the November 17th workshop. CEC members can provide suggestions of who to consider for a stakeholder invitation. CEC members voted to pass along suggestions to Ms. Wilkens by email correspondence.

Member Reports Continued:

Assistance to the Mayor. Ms. Brayton reported that she attended an ocean management planning session for the 2021 plan. (Mr. Cademartori also attended.) Upcoming meetings are the Harbor Planning public forum on October 27, and the Open Space Planning is on the horizon. She has attended two Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment meetings. These have primarily been business meetings. More detailed actions items available at the MMA website.

Futures Act. MS. Stout-Saunders mentioned that the Futures Act has re-surfaced because of notice of the Green Futures Acts, albeit with differences. Ed Woll has sent links for additional information specific to gas leaks which she believes will also be part of the greenhouse gas inventory (Ms. Wilkens will check). Ms. Stout-Saunders requested that this topic be placed on the next CEC Meeting.

Sawyer Free Library. Ms. Stout-Saunders said that she noted on the agendas of Sawyer Free Library Buildings and Grounds Committee, Saunders House (8/16/21) the topic of an oil to gas conversion project was being considered and that the Capital Projects Committee (9/23/21) discusses Goals of Sustainability. Although the CEC has not discussed the Library recently, she thought that it might be timely to follow up. She will send the details on to Mr. Cademartori who will make some inquiries.

Guest Presentation: EPA Technical Assistance Grant under its Building Blocks Resilience program (EPA Grant) and a Harvard Graduate School of Design (HGSD) study to identify climate change impacts on Cape Ann and assess opportunities for local adaptation of emerging best practices in climate governance, community engagement and landscape design. Greg Federspiel and Valarie Nelson.

Mr. Moskal has recused himself from this presentation due to any potential conflict of interests since he is employed by the Environmental Protection Agency. Ms. Wheeler confirmed that four CEC members are continuing to attend this meeting. Ms. Brayton expressed her concerns about a lack of a definition of what our commitments may be under these programs.

Ms. Nelson Re the Harvard Graduate School of Design. These are considered two separate but integrated projects, one for research by HGSD and then work under the EPA Grant to be performed by Hortley Witten, environmental consultant (Newburyport, MA). Hortley Witten will be compensated by the EPA under the terms of the Technical Assistance Grant. The City did not enter any legal obligation with the EPA nor HGSD. Last summer HGSD along with TownGreen 2025 began some research and raised funding for their work through private and public funding. Senator Bruce Tarr put a \$50K line item in the state budget for 2021. The HGSD is a gift arrangement to TownGreen. The agent for both HGSD and EPA is the Meetinghouse Foundation.

Program Design and background:

Work is Regional, a Cape Ann Climate Coalition (CACC) effort with Rockport, Gloucester, Manchester, and Essex, primarily oriented toward adaptation, not specific to the CARP which is focused much more on mitigation. Over the next six months the HGSD and EPA efforts will be blended.

Four Case Studies are planned:

1. The “Big Storm” targeting substantial tropical storms and/or hurricane. Visual Assessment, extent of dangers and damage if nothing is done, and how to engage the public for a better understanding of our vulnerabilities.
2. Adaptation: armoring infrastructure and managed retreat.
3. Net Zero and green housing. Innovations for building workforce, diversified housing, achieving carbon reductions, etc.
4. Decomposition of Solid waste, greenhouse gas emission reduction, energy recovery, composting technologies, as example.

Mr. Federspiel further explained that HGSD is a think tank that provides tools and cutting-edge research and additional set of resources for all four communities and is not in competition but is an additional resource to tap into with Gloucester’s CARP and the opportunity to build on each other’s efforts, share information, and create the grass roots engagement needed to implement projects. Regional collaboration is encouraged but ultimately each community will make its own decision on what, if any, projects to pursue.

The four Cape Ann communities teamed up with TownGreen in a proposal to the EPA. A gathering will be held in the spring to determine priorities, consider input from all stakeholders/residents, and identify the funding sources. EPA provides CACC Horsley Whitten’s time.

Next Meeting: November 10, 2021.

Motion to Adjourn: All agreed by roll call vote, 6.44pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Stout-Saunders