

MINUTES OF CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION
January 6, 2022, 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://gloucester-ma.gov/1190/January-2022-Past-Meetings>

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

Staff: Gemma Wilkens of Community Development; Interns: Cammi Cooper and Mila Barry.

Guests: Van Du, Senior Environment Planner for the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC)

Public: Marcia Hart spoke to Agenda Item # 3 and # 5.

Ms. Wheeler prefaced the meeting by stating that during any discussion that relates to the Environmental Protection Agency/Harvard School of Design project in conjunction with TownGreen will be in the last agenda item of this meeting to give Mr. Moskal the opportunity to recuse himself. As an EPA employee he believes it prudent to do so.

Minutes for Approval: September 9, 2021, October 14, 2021, November 10, 2021 not available for vote.

Member Reports:

Ms. Brayton reported attending the Community Electricity Aggregation webinar on December 7, 2021. She will circulate the link. She also attended a webinar put on by all the state utilities called Gas in Massachusetts. The major point made is that they are just collecting information right now. She stated that personally she wanted gas leaks addressed from a point of safety and that she did not want new infrastructure built if it can possibly be avoided.

Ms. Stout-Saunders met on November 19th with the Library Capital Projects Committee. She has reached out to others to get answers to questions from the Library and is awaiting feedback.

Agenda:

1. Gloucester Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP): Ms. Du and Ms. Wilkens reported on the progress of CARP since its kickoff in August-September. A draft of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory has been completed based upon 2017 statewide data. This is subject to further update but currently provides a good snapshot. Ms. Du's full report is available at the recorded CEC meeting.

Ms. Darby asked how the building consumption is a different sector from the electricity consumption sector? Ms. Du will clarify this and get back to her.

Mr. Moskal: concerning the ratio of gas to oil heat and the percentage of emissions coming from each, he noted that the report shows a disproportionately higher rate of emissions coming from a smaller number of oil heating systems than gas. Ms. Du said that all the breakdown is available. This type of data may be useful to target certain areas of the community to transition to other energy sources and developing strategies therefore.

Ms. Du reviewed the Community-wide Survey In-progress from the November workshop. Over 200 survey responses have already been received. MAPC is now conducting internal and external stakeholder interviews with, as example, the DPW, Planning, Action Inc., Gloucester Housing Authority and several others.

The Interns introduced themselves. Mila Barry as the college intern and Cami Cooper a senior at Gloucester High School. They explained how they are supporting the CARP.

Upcoming Community Workshops will be held in January, February, and March. All schedules will be advertised on all Innovate Gloucester media and the CARP webpage at the city's website. Previous meeting attendees will also receive an email notification. Ms. Darby suggested that a notification in the local newspaper. Ms. Wheeler suggests that the ability to measure how the impact of actions to be taken (and subsequently taken) effect the Greenhouse Inventory Emissions baseline of 2017. Ms. Du concurred as that this would be something to aspire to.

2. Green Communities Program Status: Ms. Wilkens reported that a grant proposal and an updated community inventory have been submitted. She will circulate the scope of work for the grant.

3. Update on the Act relative to the Future of Heat in the Commonwealth proposed state legislation: Mr. Ziergiebel commented that the thought of replacing existing gas lines and replacing with citywide geothermal is not a realistic aspect of this Act.

Ms. Hart discussed the complicated history of this bill and the state's law (2050 commitment relative to fossil fuel reduction). The DPU has been investigating potential processes and engaging with the gas companies to determine the plans to transition the state off gas and how the stranded assets (infrastructure built) will be accounted and compensated for without creating a burden on the ratepayers. And how the gas company infrastructure can be used to transition to renewable energy. She also mentioned that there are several deadlines coming due from the Next Generation bill such as the new opt-in Stretch Code.

Ms. Brayton went over her notes from the gas company webinar that she attended and noted deadlines for input which they are requesting. Ms. Darby suggested that a place to begin might be with our new school. Ms. Stout-Saunders pointed out that at a minimum new construction should be built to accommodate renewable energy/net zero technologies which is much more cost effective than going back to retrofit those facilities in the future and that delays cause more harm to the environment. She further questioned Ms. Hart's remark concerning the new Stretch Code "that Gloucester is a community that cannot afford that right now." Ms. Hart suggests that at we at least look at the new proposed zoning codes in relation to climate change both for clean energy and resiliency. Mr. Moskal asked how the CEC's role applies to recommendations to the state on a piece of legislation and that instead the CEC should determine what recommendations we can make to the city directly.

4. Possibilities for Transition to Electric School Buses. Ms. Stout-Saunders was told by Mr. Cademartori as per his communications with the School Committee that they renewed their lease of the diesel bus fleet for another three years. She suggests that we keep a transition plan as an active agenda item for the CEC.

5. Update of the TownGreen project with the EPA and Harvard Graduate School of Design (HGSD). Ms. Brayton mentioned that TownGreen will be a 501(c)3 corporation as of January 15, 2022, as reported in

their most recent Newsletter. Ms. Darby and Ms. Hart have been participating with TownGreen and stated that HGSD has not yet issued any reports. Ms. Hart mentioned the “Voices Project” that is being separately funded. This project entails graduate students who will reside in the city to randomly reach outreach out to the community to get their thoughts on city communications and individual perspectives of their experiences of living in Gloucester. Ms. Wilkens will advise once she has additional information.

Other: Ms. Wheeler mentioned that she received a note from CACC with an alert of an act to transition Massachusetts to clean heating and transportation., H. Bill 3288 and S. Bill 3256. She will circulate these to CEC members.

Next Meeting: February 10, 2022, 5pm

Meeting Adjourned: 7pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Stout-Saunders