

Clean Energy Commission Meeting Notes 7/10/14
(Approved at 9/25/14 meeting)

Members present: Candace Wheeler, Tom Kielely, Sam Cleaves, Linda Brayton **Staff member:** Matt Coogan **Guest presenters:** Erin Taylor and Katy Kidwell, both from Mass Energy Consumers Alliance

The meeting was called to order by Candace Wheeler at 7:35 p.m. in the Pond Rd. City Hall Annex, 2nd floor conference room. The minutes for the 5/22/14 meeting were unanimously approved.

Invitation to public comment: Susanne Altenberger of Phil Bolger and Friends, Inc. Boat Designers commented on two matters. First, she spoke about the proposed “2014 Gloucester Municipal Harbor Plan and DPA Master Plan.” She expressed disappointment that the subjects of “green jobs”, a “green fishing fleet” and the reduction of the City’s carbon foot print are not addressed. It is possible that this topic will be addressed under economic development in the future, but she doesn’t think this is enough. She made copies of her written Public Commentary available to interested parties.

Ms. Altenberger also said that she had “good news” to share. She brought with her copies of an article from the US Naval Institute’s June 2014 publication “Proceedings.” In this article entitled “Bridging Our Surface Connector GAP”, General James F. Amos of the US Marine Corps writes about “emerging platforms and technologies (that) promise to be game changers.” He highlights her green boat design business in Gloucester, in particular the landing craft utility class design which “...promises to provide higher speed, larger payload capacity, greater fuel efficiency, and better beach landing ability...” Ms. Altenberger added that Gloucester is a “Veteran-heavy” community which would be an added plus for locating the building of these boats here. She plans to share this information with the Mayor, the Chamber of Commerce, Frank Rose of Rose’s Marine and others.

Mass Energy Consumers Alliance: Two representatives from Mass Energy Consumers Alliance, Erin Taylor and Katy Kidwell, attended the meeting to describe Mass Energy’s clean energy programs and to discuss possible options for collaboration with Gloucester. Mass Energy is a non-profit agency established in 1982 with a mission of making energy more affordable and sustainable.

Erin said that at Mass Energy Gloucester is seen to be “very inspiring.” Because of the high interest in renewable energy in Gloucester, this community is thought to be fertile ground for marketing Mass Energy’s renewable energy products. Just this past weekend a record 261 people attended the Gloucester Wind Turbine Festival at the Blackburn Industrial Park. Mass Energy is interested in working with Gloucester for a number of reasons: e.g. certain demographic factors; the fact that Mass Energy already buys Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) from two of the Gloucester wind turbines on behalf of their members; and because many of their current renewable energy customers come from Gloucester. (Many of these customers signed up years back when the CEC’s predecessor task force promoted the National Grid Green Up programs.)

Erin explained that whenever a customer signs up to buy their power supply from Mass Energy, they are in effect switching from mostly fossil fuel to pure renewable energy supply. This creates more demand for renewable energy, displacing demand for fossil fuel energy. So, cooperation with Mass Energy is a way of “greening up the grid” one community at a time.

Mass Energy has two clean energy programs - New England Green Start and New England Wind – through which members can choose local renewable energy sources for their own electricity. Erin explained that Mass Energy “wants to be in Gloucester,” and the hope is that Gloucester will endorse these two products and work in collaboration with Mass Energy to promote them. The basic concept is that this would be a referral program. Mass Energy would pay the marketing costs etc. and very possibly would also pay about \$50 to the City for each customer that signs up. Gloucester’s part would be to do outreach; e.g. distribute information, participate in events, generate press releases, etc.

In addition to contributing to the continuing growth of renewable energy use, Mass Energy members (about 4,000 now) are supporting advocacy at the state level. Other communities and organizations that work with Mass Energy now include Northampton, Newton, Cambridge, Mass Audubon and “Mothers Out Front,” a new advocacy group.

Erin also spoke about the transparency of Mass Energy’s financial information. She said that it is shared with the public on “Giving Common” and made available by other methods also.

In addition to Mass Energy there are two other provider options available under National Grid’s Green Up program: Sterling Planet and Community Energy. Mass Energy serves 70% of National Grid’s Green Up customers.

Another way to purchase renewable energy is through competitive suppliers and community aggregation. Erin spoke about some of the pros and cons. CEC has looked into these mechanisms in the past.

Tom K. brought up the concern that CEC is a government entity and so cannot highlight one vendor over others. Linda B. suggested that as a non-profit with an established connection to the Gloucester wind turbines and also one that offers partnership incentives, promoting Mass Energy’s two renewable energy programs might be a unique situation. Matt agreed that collaborating with Mass Energy should not pose a conflict.

Sam suggested that running a series of informative events, perhaps with renewable energy programs leading off, might be an option. He also said he thought that the topic of energy efficiency would be a good one to cover. Erin then commented that Mass Energy works very closely with Mass Save and Next Step Living. Both of these organizations deal with energy conservation, and Erin suggested that perhaps their representatives could present on this topic. Linda B. said that Action, Inc. Energy Services might also be a good agency to include since it is a large provider of energy conservation services for low/moderate income households.

Erin’s offer re: marketing, etc. is specific to the two renewable programs. However, she agreed that ultimately the greatest potential for actual energy use reduction still comes from conservation measures. Other innovative measures coming along now include heat pumps, renewable thermal energy, and electric cars.

CEC members decided to discuss these ideas further when the CEC meets again in September. Katy Kidwell will attend. Sam made a motion that the CEC continue discussing creating an outreach and education series on energy efficiency for buildings and combine this with other options such as those offered under Mass Energy’s Green Start and New England Wind and others. This was seconded by Tom Kiely, and the motion was unanimously approved

Streetlight Acquisition: Matt reported that the street light maintenance contract is out to bid now. Also, the City’s Legal Counsel has sent the reviewed streetlight acquisition contract back to National Grid. It is the goal that the streetlights be officially purchased by Gloucester by 9/1/14. Purchasing LED replacements through MAPC’s group purchase program will be considered at a later date, probably in the spring, once the lights have been under Gloucester’s ownership for a while and some experience has been gained with their management. The savings from these initiatives will be absorbed into the general budget. Although the cost savings could in theory be used to pay for the LEDs directly, the purchase can still be made but will take a while longer. A National Grid subsidy could pay approximately \$120 per fixture. It was noted that LED fixtures are available as “full-cut offs” that will comply with Gloucester’s Lighting Conservation Ordinance.

Research on extension of natural gas lines: Matt was not aware of any new developments, and since John M. was absent, this subject was postponed until a later date.

Electronic Vehicle Incentive Program (EVIP) grant: Matt also reported that Gloucester’s acceptance of \$40K of EVIP funding to go toward the purchase of electric and/or hybrid cars and a charging station has been approved by City Council. Susanne Altenberger suggested that students in the High School Automotive Shop might be able to do some retrofits under a new program available. Cars would just need a 220V outlet.

Green Communities award and boiler projects: Green Communities grant awards are being announced at a press conference in Ashland. Gloucester is receiving its full \$250K request for O'Maley boilers and gas conversion.

Another boiler replacement project is taking place right now at City Hall. The old oil burners (the second oldest in the state next to those on the Nantucket ferry) are being broken up and taken away to make way for new gas furnaces.

Additional Inspectional Services position: The line-item for a new position that was recommended by CEC to assist Inspectional Services with Stretch Code enforcement was approved in the in the new FY'15 City budget.

Coastal Zone Management (CZM) grant: Gloucester has received a \$50K CZM Coastal Community Resilience Grant to assess areas of sea level rise vulnerability in the city. This subject will be presented by Julia Knisel, CZM, at the next MAPC meeting (July 17th at the Peabody Institute Library in Danvers from 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.) The public is welcome.

On-going and New Action Items:

- Report on the Maritime Gloucester Climate Change Forum – Tom B.
- Update on Strategic Plan - Tom B.
- Obtain National Grid gas line maps – John M.
- Continue updating CEC web page, annual reports and posting of agendas and minutes – Tom K. Candace and Linda B.
- Check CO2 reduction potential for O'Maley project - Matt
- Explore potential solar initiatives – Matt
- Update on Inspectional Services position - Matt
- Check on Green Communities signs and placement - Matt

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m. By unanimous agreement, there will be no August meeting. The next meeting is planned for Thursday, September 25, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. Location: to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Brayton