

Minutes, Gloucester Clean Energy Commission  
April 27, 2011  
Approved 5/24/2011

Present: Candace Wheeler, Tom Balf, John Moskal, Sam Cleaves, Jill Buchanan, Linda Brayton, Gregg Cademartori, and for the last portion of the meeting, Rich Kleiman from Gloucester Engineering and councilor Paul McGeary

Minutes from last meeting (3/22/11) were approved

Nomination for Chair position: After serving as Commission Chair for over 2 years, Sam Cleaves requested that another commission member take over. Tom was nominated and unanimously approved as the new Commission Chair. He has accepted the position for a one-year term.

Candace Wheeler was nominated and unanimously approved for the position of Vice Chair.

Gregg reported that the City Council has officially accepted funding for the Green Communities grant that was awarded to the city. This grant will fund energy efficiency at the Talbot rink and the other energy improvement projects at O'Maley school as outlined in the grant.

Gregg reported that the Blackburn feasibility study is complete, but will not be made public until the state is satisfied. The administration has approved it as a deliverable, and no problem is anticipated. Boreal will make a presentation in the next couple of weeks based on their business model. Not clear as to whether the commission will be able to sit in on the meeting.

Linda B. reported that the Gloucester Engineering outreach meeting for Ward 1 had a positive tone with no controversy at the mention of potential wind project with GE.

Those who attended the site visit to Medford's Northwind 100 turbine reported that it was a very positive experience. Noise seemed surprisingly minimal. Bob Paine of the Medford Clean energy commission was a gracious host.

Strategic plan development:

Sam noted that improvements need to be made in communication with Community Development Department protocol for who does what, and that we need a clear line of communication between us and the mayor.

Committee members will review the strategic plan and tweak Tom's proposed plan based on our understanding of our most effective role for the city and our green communities goals.

Sam suggested that we focus for the next year on building awareness among the larger community- gathering information and setting context for why our work is important through forums and other gatherings.

We need to begin by gathering information about how climate change is going to affect Gloucester- sea level rise, fisheries, infrastructure, other cost of living, environmental etc.

Communications subcommittee members Jill, Sam and Linda will get together to discuss next communications steps and will offer a communications plan at the next meeting.

Note: Candace had been on this subcommittee, but will step off so Sam can join it and also so that we will meet the legal limit of 3 subcommittee members.

Related to this, Gregg will likely have LIDAR (Light Image Detection and Ranging- to get topographical information) data for the city by the fall. This will give real data now and show us what is likely to be underwater in the future.

Rich Kleiman from Gloucester Engineering joined the meeting seeking GEC support for GE's proposed wind project.

Recap of proposal: GE wants to put 1-2 turbines on their land in the Blackburn industrial area, with one turbine in the parking lot (edge) and one in the woods near industrial buildings.

They want city to be the meter holder of record with National Grid, which would allow up to two MW turbines to get the full net metering benefit and they'd be using the city's accounts as part of that net metering.

The City would be required to do some administrative work (i.e., cutting a check each month related to the project) and would receive somewhere between 5 – 7% return of the gross credits dollars which would offset the city's usage.

The bottom line is that this could offer a small annual benefit (about \$50K per year) with no risk to the city. It would also help to firm up a long-term investment by GE to the site and staying in Gloucester, prevent rolling brownouts that they currently experience periodically, and add to the job base and tax income to the city.

Schedule: they have a team of consultants ready to go as soon as they know that the City is ready to go ahead.

They will need a decision from the City Council by August.

The question was raised as to the possible impact on the Varian project. Rich said that Varian has no problem with the project, though they do want GE to purchase the wind data, which GE will do.

John asked about electrical capacity for the projects-

Rich says that large utility lines exist that can handle the energy feed that would be produced.

The question was raised that if two turbines were built, which would offset the city's entire load, how would this affect city's option for its own projects?

Gregg responded that we can net meter up to 10 MW, so GE's would be 20-40% of the city's total opportunity to net meter. However, we should keep in mind that the net metering cap will be ending at some point- perhaps in the next 2-3 years.

The Commission voted unanimously to recommend that the city further its investigation into the Gloucester Engineering wind turbine project as it appears to be a worthy project with potential to provide notable benefits with minimal risk to the City.

Next meeting: May 24<sup>th</sup>- dinner with Susan St. Pierre at 6:00.

Action Items:

- 1) Tom will invite new DPW facilities manager, Jim Hafey to the next meeting to brief him on our work to date and encourage his involvement in helping us reach our 20% reduction in energy use in the next five years.
- 2) Gregg Cademartori will find out whether any or all of the commission members could attend the Boreal presentation relating to the Blackburn wind feasibility project.
- 3) All committee members will study Tom Balf's last draft of a strategic plan and bring recommendations for changes for review at the next meeting
- 4) Jill will now include the mayor directly in minutes distribution so that the mayor will be more directly included in communications and future action items. This will be one important step in better communication between the city staff and the committee, ultimately improving our long-term effectiveness.