

Clean Energy Commission Meeting Notes 9/25/14 **(Approved at meeting of 10/30/14)**

Members present: Candace Wheeler, Tom Kieley, Tom Balf, Linda Stout-Saunders **Staff:** Matt Coogan **Public:** Joe George, Suzanne Altenberger

The meeting was called to order by Candace Wheeler at 7:35 p.m. at Pond Rd. City Hall Annex, 2nd floor conference room. The minutes for the 7/10/14 meeting were unanimously approved.

Public comment: Suzanne Altenberger spoke of the fact that her company's green boat design received favorable comments in the "Marine Corps Gazette." She also commented on new standards proposed by the New England Fishery Management Council and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, in particular re: the vessel baseline for carbon emissions. She feels that the proposed regulations (for which there will be public comment taken Monday) improve the current regulations by about 50%. Finally she shared her opinion of the new Harbor Plan, which has a deadline for comment of 10/10/14. She is opposed to about ¾ of it, she said. She expressed her desire for CEC to play a lead role in ensuring that future planning for the harbor includes green energy and green economy initiatives. She sees Gloucester as positioned to be a leader in these fields in the future.

Mass Energy: Katie Kidwell was unable to attend this meeting and won't be available until later in the fall. The continuation of the discussion from the previous meeting on possible collaboration on outreach and education between Mass Energy and the CEC was therefore postponed. Linda B. brought up the fact that the deadline for applying for Solarize MA is October 15th. She said that in her opinion CEC would not be able to pursue both Solarize MA and Mass Energy outreach at the same time successfully given the fact that both would be labor-intensive. Tom K. expressed agreement. This subject was set aside until later.

Streetlight acquisition: Matt reported that DPW staff and representatives from Siemens (low bidder for the streetlight maintenance contract) will be meeting tomorrow. The official transfer is scheduled for October 1st when the Treasurer will write a check for one dollar to National Grid for the purchase. There will be a "flow chart" which deals with the process – how to handle streetlight outages (1-800 #) etc. The annual cost of maintenance is \$48K (\$1. per fixture plus overhead and storage of materials.) Net savings is conservatively estimated to be \$190K a year. There is a one year option to renew.

An RFQ went out from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and Siemens was selected as its contractor for LED street light conversion projects. Siemens has worked in Gloucester before and has a large Massachusetts presence. It is thought that perhaps Gloucester could use some of its next round of Green Communities grant funds for this next spring. Tom Daniel has drafted a press release on this streetlight acquisition which will be sent out as soon as the purchase is official. (As an example of the appearance of LED lighting, see the LED lights installed on the A. Piatt Andrew Bridge.)

Gas line extension research: John Moskal is looking into this but no update is available at this time.

Electric Vehicle Incentive Program (EVIP): Matt updated on this GC grant received by Gloucester. There have been budget cuts, but there is still \$7,500 available toward an electric vehicle purchase. Possibly a Nissan Leaf can be leased for 3 years instead for this \$7,500. There should still be \$10,000 available for a dual charging station. It is not clear, however, whether or not leasing the Nissan Leaf would still qualify the City for the charging station.

Suzanne Altenberger and Joe George described a \$7K conversion kit available now with which high school automotive students could easily convert gas vehicle engines to electricity. Car air conditioning can be electric. Motors can make and send "juice" back to the battery. There are contractors starting to do this work now.

Miscellaneous heating projects: Matt reported on the O'Maley gas conversion, etc.; the new gas boiler installation begins tomorrow. Other buildings where furnaces and boilers are being replaced include City Hall, the American

Legion Building and the Bay View Fire station (all gas.) The new West Parish School will get a new high efficiency boiler, but gas is not currently available as an option. He said that there is no doubt that the CEC's Green Communities grant funds set a direction and leveraged a lot of this work. Tom K. suggested that we add up the energy savings from all the projects completed to date as an indicator of our progress.

New Building Inspector position: A new staff member has been hired for this position at 19 hours a week. He works for the City of Beverly the other half of his time. His role is to carry out Stretch Code enforcement and also to educate contractors about the code.

Exploration of solar initiatives:

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (Mass CEC) has recently sent out an announcement which notifies us that Block 20 of the Commonwealth Solar II Rebate Program is about to open but also that the program will sunset after Block 20 closes. This notice states in part that "Block 20 will have at least \$1.5 million in available funding and will remain open until all of the funds are reserved or until December 31, 2014, whichever comes sooner... With the SREC II Program in place and with the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) residential solar loan program anticipated to be in place later this year, Mass CEC and DOER feel these programs will provide the needed incentive to the current small-scale solar market moving forward without further need for this rebate program.

The Mass CEC Solarize Mass program is an incentive/outreach program that seeks to increase the adoption of small-scale solar electricity in participating communities through a competitive tiered pricing structure that increases the savings for everyone as more home and business owners sign contracts. The municipality, the community as a whole, a designated solar contractor and a solar advocate (who commits to 6 months of work and is paid a \$500 stipend) all work together. The deadline for the next round of funding is October 15th. CEC members agreed that this initiative would need a larger organization than the CEC since it is an intensive program involving public meetings and going door-to-door. Candace mentioned that the Unitarian Universalist church is very interested in working on promoting renewable energy in the community, and she will be in communication with them soon, particularly around an educational event they are planning for Nov. 2nd. Another citizens group mentioned was the Friends of Good Harbor. However their primary focus is sea level rise.

Matt mentioned that there was an architectural intern from Catholic University working with him this summer on energy usage data. Also, it was determined that from 1/1/14 to mid-July, 18 permits for residential solar have been "pulled" in Gloucester and half are finished projects now.

Joe George commented on net-metering and said that distributed energy generation may eventually replace the grid system. People like the Koch Brothers (who are politically active billionaire donors and leaders in the fossil fuel industry) are fighting against raising the net-metering cap which would allow more renewable energy to be produced. The utility companies receive tax incentives to support renewable and energy efficiency projects. This works for them because they don't have to invest in new infrastructure.

Tom Kieley remarked that the Commission has been considering both renewable energy and energy efficiency as areas upon which to focus and said that he thinks we need to consider the bigger picture and decide what programs we will support going forward. We should tap the state expertise on the current array of available programs, and do site visits to places like Gorton's that have implemented green energy measures, as background for choosing our next initiatives. He suggested that he could contact some of his colleagues for their input and recommendations particularly around education and outreach, and CEC agreed to this offer.

Other on-going and new items:

- Dog Park Lighting: Linda Saunders has learned from Dog Park representatives that they have been offered a donation of photovoltaic lights for the Park but are in need of funding for the site preparation and installation. Linda S. suggested that perhaps they could apply for Block 20 funds (a per project rebate) from the Mass Clean Energy Center (Mass CEC.) CEC members agreed this was a good idea, and Linda S. will let Dog Park representatives know about this opportunity. Linda B. suggested that if this doesn't work out the CEC should consider including the \$7K of needed funding in the next Green Communities grant

round application. (The Dog Park volunteers originally approached CEC when the amount needed was much higher.)

- Matt reported that work is beginning on the City's vulnerability analysis (re: sea level rise) being funded by a grant received from Coastal Zone Management (CZM.) This will involve using Geographic Information System (GIS) layers and (Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) data and choosing low, medium, or high sea level rise projections to produce inundation scenarios and identify critical infrastructure priorities. Hopefully this will be the first step toward future studies, and a Cape Ann plan. A required deliverable for the study is mapping technology at a scale that is sufficient to identify individual properties.
- Tom Balf spoke about the Climate Change forums sponsored by Maritime Gloucester. A resulting report is being shared with participants. It was shared with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and perhaps will be shared with the *Gloucester Daily Times* in the near future. Momentum is building, he stated, but it is important to keep on with the process. He is thinking about CEC's role in this endeavor. He also mentioned that the harbor is being dredged (for National Grid) and that this project would necessarily include climate change information. Information sharing by the consultants would be extremely useful.
- Next Step Living, an energy efficiency vendor, has approached Matt and Candace re: CEC partnering on energy audits in this area. This again brought up the issue as to the relationship CEC, a government entity, may appropriately have with for-profit vendors, given procurement laws and other fairness issues. Next Step Living is currently partnering with many Massachusetts communities, including Newburyport, Lynn, Salem, Swampscott, Lexington and Melrose, and can also partner with non-profit groups, such as a Chamber of Commerce.
- Matt said that the Green Communities goal of a 20% reduction in energy use in 5 years may well be met. The O'Maley project and others began in 2014 but will not be finished this year. However, there will be a grace period so these energy savings will be included.
- Update of 2011 Strategic Plan – Tom Balf is working on this.

On-going and New Action Items:

- Update on Strategic Plan - Tom B.
- Obtain National Grid gas line maps - John M.
- Continue updating CEC web page, reports, etc. - Tom K. Candace and Linda B.
- Check on Green Communities signs and placement – Matt
- Inform Dog Park representatives of Mass CEC Block 20 solar project incentives - Linda S.
- Total the energy savings from completed projects to date as an indicator of our progress - Matt

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. The next meeting is planned for Thursday, 10/30/14 at 7:30 p.m.
Location: to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Brayton