

Minutes of the meeting of the Gloucester Clean Energy Commission
Sept. 22 2016,
First Floor Conference Room, City Hall
(Approved at meeting of December 8, 2016)

Attending: Commissioners Candace Wheeler, Linda Brayton, Linda Stout-Saunders, Tom Kiely, Paul McGeary, Robert Myers (via telephone),

Staff: Matt Coogan

Consultant: Stefano Loretto of Good Energy LP

Ms. Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**Discussion with Stefano Loretto of Good Energy LP concerning public outreach for
Community Aggregation program**

Mr. Loretto said that our consultation with the state Department of Energy Resources (DOER) is complete and that the next step is for DOER to issue letter of consultation to go to the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) for approval of our plan.

Mr. Loretto said his goal for the evening was to get an understanding about avenues public outreach. Gary Fogelman of Good Energy's marketing department will reach out to media outlets.

Mr. Loretto said he would also provide sample materials for our review and customization. The materials will be sent to the commission members via **Mr. Coogan**. He said the establishment of a website would probably be the first step. He discussed naming the site, saying it should be easy to grasp and remember. Part of the marketing effort will include creating a toll-free phone number that would spell out the theme name. (For example, Brookline used "Brookline-Green"; they are aggressively green, meeting a Class I renewable electricity requirement 25% above the state minimum.)

Mr. McGeary suggested the theme "GLO GREEN" might be something to consider (for GLO-GREEN Power Purchasing Group). Members of the committee were asked to suggest other possible themes to be circulated by **Mr. Coogan** prior to our next meeting on Oct. 27. Good Energy can check out the availability of any phone number ideas we come up with. Once the electricity bid is signed, the winning supplier will be tied in to the chosen Gloucester aggregation phone number.

Mr. Kiely asked if **Mr. Loretto** had a checklist of steps that had been taken to promote other recent energy aggregation efforts in other cities and towns. **Mr. Loretto** said he would provide a list prior to the next meeting.

Mr. Kiely specifically asked **Mr. Loretto** to provide advice as to what activities had been the most useful. **Mr. Loretto** mentioned radio spots, social media, marketing pieces in newspapers, billboards, public meetings, especially at City Council meetings and neighborhood meetings. He suggested materials should be placed in neighborhood gathering places and at schools and the senior center. Other venues include ethnic restaurants and yard signs (such as, "This home is using green energy").

Mr. McGeary asked whether traditional political lawn signs might be part of a campaign prior to the mailing to all electric customers, announcing the aggregation program.

Mr. Loretto also asked the commission to provide guidance as to languages in which materials should be prepared.

Mr. Kiely suggested reaching out to neighborhood organizations, ward councilors, etc. (some examples; seARTS, Fishermen's Wives Assoc., Council on Aging, Action, churches, North Shore 104.9 Radio, Cape Ann TV, Good Morning Gloucester, Mayor's Facebook page).

Ms. Brayton asked if there was a step-by-step checklist for the process. **Mr. Loretto** said there was. **Ms. Brayton** suggested using social media, lapel pins and logos to raise awareness.

Mr. Loretto said there would be opportunities to reach out to people who are with a supplier other than National Grid. (Only National Grid customers are included in the opt-out notification on energy aggregation.) He noted that non-National Grid customers would not get an opt-out letter, but an effort to show them how they can join (when their other supplier contract ends) would be part of the rollout process.

Ms. Stout-Saunders and **Ms. Wheeler** asked if it was possible to know how many electric customers are not on National Grid. **Mr. Loretto** replied that account-level data is provided after the DPU approval, but the utility gives you only the eligible accounts (excluding the ones with competitive suppliers). The list provided by National Grid could be compared with a list of all households to identify a list of those customers who might be approached. He also said that National Grid provides through its website the number of all electric customers served in the "outage" section.

He said there were 16,572 customers in Gloucester, 12,592 households. That number can be compared with the number provided by National Grid to derive the number of households that might benefit from the program. He did note that some people who did not want their information shared would not be on list, and that some of those might not realize it, as the choice not to share information could have been done more than 20 years ago.

Ms. Stout-Saunders asked if there would be Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the web site. **Mr. Loretto** said there would be and that the FAQs would be updated as the program rolled out. He also noted that the commission should stress that no one from the city will call on customers personally. He said there had been occasions in the past in other communities when other energy providers had claimed or implied that they were part of the energy aggregation program.

Ms. Stout-Saunders asked if the FAQs would be available to people who did not receive letters about the program. **Mr. Loretto** said they would be.

Mr. Loretto also noted that owners of multiple properties may have different energy providers and that the property owner must contact the supplier. He noted that owners who deal with multiple energy companies should have all their bills at hand so that the proper accounts are converted.

The commissioners were asked to weigh in on various channels that the program might use for outreach. The suggestions should be forwarded to **Mr. Coogan** to be shared with the commissioners and with **Mr. Loretto**. The suggestions are due by Oct. 7.

Ms. Brayton noted that **Dick Prouty** might have suggestions on outreach, learned from the recent solar challenge program.

Mr. Loretto noted that there would be public meetings before and during the 30-day opt-out period. The immediate goal, he said, was to create content, strategy for outreach, and a platform. Gary at Good Energy will send samples of literature used elsewhere to Matt, who will share it with CEC members.

Ms. Brayton expressed concern about the likelihood that many Action clients would come to her asking about the opt-out letter. Since competitive suppliers often target low-income and elderly households, Action clients often have already been approached by other competitive suppliers, and the opt-out letter may lead to some confusion.

Ms. Wheeler asked what other communities were in the latest multi-community aggregation group going before the DPU with Gloucester. **Mr. Loretto** said he would provide a list, but Sudbury and Winchester are included.

Mr. Kiely observed that he saw two phases: the advance work of building awareness and enthusiasm; and the phase starting just before the opt-out notices and continuing through the opt-out phase, when it would be important to be able to react to specific individual questions. He suggested that we will need more specific rate information for individual users so they can compare and decide.

Mr. Loretto noted that the chosen supplier's employees will have a script and resources to answer questions. He stressed that an important agenda item for the next meeting will be our strategy for phase 1: priorities and targeted market. Priorities for Phase 2 are down the road and involve more specific outreach to individuals.

Mr. Coogan asked when the city would go to bid. **Mr. Loretto** said that bidding could be done within a couple of weeks of getting the order from DPU, and that he was already informally circulating Gloucester's information with potential suppliers. He noted that potential suppliers need to be aware of the agreement with MassEnergy that the renewable portion of the electricity will be coming through MassEnergy from the Gloucester wind turbines. He said that recently two new suppliers have moved into the Massachusetts market, but that they had done aggregation supply elsewhere. (We don't want a supplier who will climb the learning curve on Gloucester's dime.) He also noted that Good Energy has a threshold for bidders to be qualified and that suppliers can't bid if disqualified.

Mr. Coogan asked what our response would be if the bid price was not favorable.

Mr. Loretto said we would update our information and wait for market conditions to improve. He noted that we could delay the bid solicitation if market conditions were unfavorable. He also said that the chosen start date would be critical as prices fluctuate seasonally.

Ms. Stout-Saunders asked about the National Grid November pricing. **Mr. Loretto** said it would probably rise from 8.03 cents/kilowatt hour to 9.745 cents/kilowatt hour. (Auctions are 2nd weeks of September and March).

Ms. Stout-Saunders asked where the budget for the outreach and marketing was coming from. **Mr. Loretto** said the costs were included in Good Energy's fee that is paid as part of the electricity supply contract, unless the effort was substantially beyond the normal scope and scale.

Mr. Loretto added that, in terms of marketing, Gloucester had a unique story in that the clean energy was derived from our turbines.

Mr. Coogan asked about the impact of the aggregation on our Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs).

Mr. Loretto said that Gloucester now consumes 91 million kWh of electricity. He estimated that 80 million kWh, of which 5 percent came from renewable sources, would generate 4,000 RECs (Renewable Energy Certificates). He said that based on Environmental Protection Agency figures, that amounted to roughly 1.5 million miles not driven. These figures could be included in a press release on aggregation.

Actions Summary for Aggregation Project: Settle on ideas for thematic concept; choose outreach strategies (who should we reach out to and how should we reach out); **Mr. Loretto** will send a packet of sample materials and a checklist of program steps.

MassSave Incentive Program

Mr. Coogan said that he had submitted the letter of intent to National Grid, and that the mayor's office is interested, though he conceded that the financial benefits of participation

in the program would be modest (approximately \$41,000 in funds for the City) if we achieved all our goals, which include conducting 1,000 energy audits. He noted that the required level of commitment to the program is very high so the city would need a contractor.

Mr. McGeary noted that if Gloucester is chosen, we would aim to start the program in January 2017, and have a year to reach the goals.

Ms. Wheeler asked if a percentage of the work would be offered to a local contractor. We could either work with one designated home contractor, who would fund and handle all the marketing legwork, and do a larger proportion of the home/business improvements; OR we could take on more of the marketing ourselves, leaving home and business owners to select the home contractor, which may mean less competition with local home improvement contractors. The contractor does the audit for free, and MassSave and the homeowner pay for the installation of energy -saving measures (City doesn't have to pay for any of the work). Matt will ask Homeworks if they have found a way to work with local contractors in their MassSave programs in other towns.

Ms. Stout-Saunders asked who the contractor might be, and noted that the quality of home contractors is crucial to a successful program with happy customers. **Mr. Coogan** said the contractor or contractors would be chosen through the city's procurement process. He said he hoped that Town Green 2025 would be part of the process.

Mr. Kiely expressed a preference for sending a request for qualifications (RFQ) to several potential contractors, with clear minimum standards ensuring the contractor has the capacity to handle this scope and level of project. **Ms. Saunders** noted that we could also start with an RFQ to identify contractors that have the capacity for the MassSave project and then follow with an RFP (request for proposals) from those contractors who qualify.

Mr. Kiely suggested that **Mr. Coogan** follow up with **Dick Prouty** and **Tim Grenier** of Town Green to see if they're still committed to MassSave's program and how they might be willing to participate.

Mr. Coogan said the city is interested in having a home performance contractor guide the process, but that utilizing Town Green or another grass-roots organization would be possible. He noted that participation in the MassSave program was part of the Commission's strategic plan. Candace, Matt, Dick Prouty and Chris Sicorenza (of the Mayor's Office) met on Sept. 21 to discuss the idea of collaborating on a MassSave initiative through the National Grid Community program, and all agreed it was worth a try as long as the timing of the National Grid program didn't conflict with other CEC projects or delay the effort for too long.

Mr. Kiely asked what the next steps are to implement the program.

Mr. Coogan suggested the creation of an ad hoc working group of CEC members to prepare a draft application ready for the next meeting. **Ms. Brayton** asked what goals Gloucester would have to achieve under the program.

Mr. Coogan said they are cumulative goals, divided into three phases: baseline, threshold, cumulative. If all goals are met at each stage, the reward would be \$41,000. The goals include:

- 1,400 assessments.
- 300 insulation projects
- 59 thermostats.

The commission voted to establish a working group consisting of **Mr. Coogan**, **Mr. Kiely** and **Ms. Brayton** to develop a draft proposal for the October meeting.

Fuller School Property for solar installation?

Mr. Coogan said he had no information but would look into it with the developers.

Solar at the Jodrey Fish Pier

Mr. Coogan said he had not heard back from Claire King at MassDevelopment.

Low income solar

Mr. Kiely said that the State of New York is looking into ways to provide financing to enable lower income households to do solar projects. (Also need to create incentives for landlords of apartments for lower-income tenants to consider solar on their buildings.)

Wave Energy

Mr. McGeary said that he had not heard back from his contact who worked on this concept.

Gas Leaks

Mr. Coogan said the Metropolitan Area Planning Council is slated to release a report in October on the scale and proposed solutions to the problem.

Microgrids

Mr. Coogan said that the state Clean Energy Commission will be releasing a grant opportunity soon for technical assistance on a microgrid feasibility study and added that participation will require internal staff work.

Energy Storage Options

Ms. Saunders and Mr. Myers attended a conference on this topic. The state has released a report. **Ms. Saunders** said she would circulate the link. **Mr. Coogan** said that it would cost \$50 million to develop the storage capacity to power 50 buildings with current technology, and that Gloucester is not ready for this scale of project yet.

Next meeting is scheduled for October 27, 2016.

The commission adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul McGeary
CEC Member