

## Minutes of the Clean Energy Commission Meeting December 8, 2016

(Approved at CEC Meeting of January 26, 2017)

### Attending

**Commissioners:** Candace Wheeler (chair), Bob Myers, Linda Stout-Saunders, Tom Kiely, Linda Brayton, John Moskal, Paul McGeary.

**Staff:** Matt Coogan

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. at the First Floor Conference Room in City Hall by **Candace Wheeler**, Chairman. On a motion by **Ms. Stout-Saunders**, seconded by CEC members, the minute of the meetings of Sept. 22, 2016 and March 24, 2016 were unanimously approved.

### Member reports

**Meeting with Endicott College staff:** **Ms. Brayton**, **Mr. McGeary** and **Ms. Wheeler** reported on the meeting held in November with Endicott College staff including Justin Topp, Assistant Dean of Science, Technology and Mathematics; Rich Weissman, Director of the college's Organizational Management Program and Center for Leadership; and Sarah Creighton, Director of the college's Office of Sustainability. Much of Endicott's work has been focused on conservation and reduction of energy usage including \$1 million spent on retrofitting lighting and \$300,000 in MassSave incentives implemented, Ms. Creighton said. The college also installed solar paneling on a parking lot roof, generating \$30,000 in renewable energy certificates per year. This project could be a template for putting a solar deck over parking at the Fuller School property redevelopment. **Mr. McGeary** said he had called Tim Flaherty to see if solar had been considered for the YMCA parking area, and **Mr. Moskal** noted that solar electricity could be used for heating the swimming pool. Also discussed was collaboration with Endicott on renewable energy projects. Mr. Topp said Endicott was a member of the Marine Ocean Technology Network. **Ms. Wheeler** pointed out that discussion was prompted by she and **Ms. Brayton** having attended a conference on tidal energy earlier in November at which Endicott representatives were present. The CEC commissioners and the Endicott representatives discussed the possibility of establishing an internship working with the commission or **Mr. Coogan** on clean energy projects, for which a student would receive college credit. Also discussed was broadening the curriculum offerings to focus on renewable energy.

### Tidal Energy Discussion

**Mr. Myers** said he had contacted the firm Littoral Systems to discuss potential opportunities in Gloucester. The firm creates modular generating stations driven by tidal flow. He stressed that his contact was as a private citizen, not in his official capacity. He said he hoped to get a PowerPoint presentation from John Ashburne of Littoral Systems to describe the company's efforts. A formal feasibility study of possible Cape Ann sites for this modular technology would be expensive (around \$50K). **Mr. Myers** did note that most of the opportunities for tidal power were in Maine, where higher velocity tidal flows had been identified. He noted that energy output can be stated as "velocity cubed." He suggested that maintenance of facilities would need people with vessels and marine experience and that Gloucester and its fleet might be well positioned to provide that service. **Mr. Myers** pointed out that Mr. Ashburne was instrumental in establishing the Record Hill wind power generating station, consisting of 22 turbines in Oxford Maine. (For information on Record Hill project see this website: <http://recordhillwind.com>).

**Mr. Moskal** pointed out that Record Hill was part of the ISO New England power grid with its power "wheeled into" the grid, and the owners (a Yale University-affiliated organization) functioning as a net metering customer. **Mr. Myers** said Littoral Systems hoped to use a similar approach, and suggested that Endicott College or a **taxable** affiliated entity could be the net metering customer. **Mr. Moskal** noted that, in order to finance such a project—which is done largely through tax credits—there would have to be a taxable entity to reap the benefits of those tax credits.

**Mr. Myers** said that Littoral Systems was hoping to generate a better “mesh” (that is a map of currents and ocean bottom) to determine if there were other opportunities nearer to Cape Ann, but he reiterated that the kinds of second-generation machines produced by Littoral Systems could be tended by draggers and fishing boats.

**Mr. Moskal** asked who the customers might be for tidal power. **Ms. Wheeler** suggested shore side facilities on the harbor, and wondered if the Economic Development and Industrial Commission (EDIC) could play a role in making reduced price renewable electricity available to Blackburn Park or harbor businesses, which could make Gloucester more attractive to new businesses.

**Ms. Wheeler** asked **Mr. Myers** to see if he could arrange a visit to a commission meeting by Mr. Ashburne or someone else from Littoral Systems to further discuss the potential.

**Mr. Myers** reported that he planned to attend a meeting on energy storage in Boston on Dec. 9. He noted that the ability to store power whether generated by tidal, solar or wind energy would be important to the eventual success of any renewable energy projects. The meeting is sponsored by the New England Energy Restructuring Roundtable. **Mr. McGeary** recalled that the Gloucester EDIC had been approached about an energy storage project. **Mr. Moskal** said that large scale storage would be pursued by utilities, to help offset peak loads and retiring power plants. Smaller scale storage would be a key tool for allowing residences and businesses to get off the grid.

#### **Action item**

- Arrange a meeting with representatives of Littoral Systems and the Clean Energy Commission. (**Mr. Myers**)

**Mr. Coogan honored:** **Ms. Wheeler** reported that **Mr. Coogan** and the city had been honored with a “Leading by Example” award which recognizes public employees for “Leadership in Clean Energy and Sustainability.” for public employees.

#### **Community Energy Aggregation (CEA)**

**Mr. Coogan** said that the city had not yet received notice to proceed from the state Department of Public Utilities. Therefore, he said, going out for bids for an energy provider by January 1 was no longer feasible. He noted that this was not necessarily a bad thing, as the winter rate from National Grid this year was exceptionally low (9.7 cents per kilowatt hour) and the attractiveness of aggregation is even more pronounced when rates are higher. Delaying the solicitation of bids might result in a more attractive rate, and in March we will know what the summer rates will be.

**Ms. Stout-Saunders** suggested that the staff start compiling historical data on average rates for electricity so that the impact of aggregation could be shown in a historical context.

**Mr. Coogan** also asked that any suggestions for changes and improvements to the draft website ([gloucester-cea.com](http://gloucester-cea.com)) be forwarded to him so that he could send them to Good Energy LLC, which is developing the site. (Matt had sent CEC members a link to the website).

In response to a question by **Ms. Stout-Saunders**, **Mr. Coogan** noted that “Gloucester Green” was the umbrella site for all our energy conservation and clean energy efforts, but that [gloucester-cea.com](http://gloucester-cea.com) was the site specific to the energy aggregation program.

**Ms. Brayton** noted that the impact of the aggregation program on people receiving fuel assistance people was still not addressed. She said that since nearly half of the City’s households either receive or are potentially eligible for an R-2 low-income discount electric rate, that information for this group of residents should be prominently featured in marketing materials. In addition, this information should be added to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section of the website. She also asked that the FAQ section address the proper course of action for people who, like herself, were enrolled in the Green Up renewable energy program.

**Mr. Myers** asked if we were falling behind in preparing for the CEA. **Mr. Coogan** responded that we couldn’t do much without the formal notice to proceed and that Good Energy had wide experience in energy markets and we would do well to follow their counsel on when to solicit bids.

**Ms. Wheeler** asked how the city would make its decision and frame the request for proposals. **Mr. Coogan** said that once the notice to proceed was received the City administration, City Councilors, Good Energy and members of the commission would hold a strategy session to formulate the key considerations in soliciting and

weighing bids. The City's Planning and Development (P&D) Subcommittee would be especially interested in the CEA project.

#### **National Grid 2017 Community Initiative**

**Mr. Coogan** reported that our application to participate in the National Grid Community Initiative Program had been submitted and that we were awaiting response. *[After the meeting the city was informed that it had been chosen to participate in the program.]* The program supports communities in a campaign to encourage residents and businesses to take advantage of MassSave energy efficiency incentives.

**Mr. Coogan** will work with National Grid to set up an orientation meeting and as many CEC members as possible should attend. **Mr. Coogan** said the question of whether the city, in conjunction with the Town Green 2025 program, will attempt to administer the program itself or seek to hire a home performance contractor to perform that function was still open.

**Mr. Myers** observed that outreach to the community will be very important to ensure that the city meets its goals to receive the award offered by the program. TownGreen2025 and CEC should both be involved in outreach, but if necessary, we can also do an RFP for additional marketing assistance. **Mr. Coogan** explained that National Grid provides some up-front money for publicity costs.

Also discussed was the possibility of the city doing outreach to large commercial customers who are not covered by the National Grid Community Initiative program to encourage energy efficiency. **Mr. Coogan** is talking with Economic Development Director Sal DeStefano about ways to help, and the Chamber of Commerce may be willing to sponsor speakers on topics relevant to businesses, like commercial solar, solar parking canopies, and energy efficiency measures.

#### **Action items**

- Set up date for orientation meeting on the Community Initiative Program (**Mr. Coogan**)
- Circulate the completed application questionnaire to the commissioners. (**Mr. Coogan**)

#### **Green Community Grant Funding**

**Mr. Coogan** said that the next round of Green Community funding would open up in March, and that he was working with the city Department of Public Works to identify possible projects that might be eligible under the program. In particular, the O'Maley Innovation Middle School and Gloucester High School were being studied, as they have relatively high energy usage per square foot of building space.

**Mr. Moskal** asked how Gloucester rated on its energy saving efforts. **Mr. Coogan** said we were "higher than most" and cited some steps that had been taken including smart thermostats in public buildings. One option for funding would be implementation of software to do more sophisticated analytics of current energy use in City buildings, to track usage and identify what could be better managed.

**Ms. Stout-Saunders** asked whether the city's wastewater treatment plant was on the list of potential projects. **Mr. Coogan** said it had recently undergone a renovation. **Mr. Moskal** pointed out that the plant is operating under a waiver from the Environmental Protection Agency and that Veolia (plant management contractor) is on the hook for any energy efficiency upgrades at the plants. Veolia pays the energy bills as part of their contract, so they have an incentive for energy efficiency measures. However, it is likely that the City will be required to build a new wastewater plant with secondary treatment, so big expenditures for energy upgrades at the old plant will not be a priority. Green infrastructure funding may be available for plant improvements or replacement.

#### **Solar Ordinance**

**Ms. Stout-Saunders** asked if there had been any progress on formulating a zoning ordinance for ground-based solar energy as a principal use on a property. **Mr. Coogan** said there had not been a request for such a facility, so the progress had been slow. He did note that, under current zoning, a facility could be built but would require a variance.

**Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (CPACE) Program**

**Ms. Stout-Saunders** reported that the guidelines governing the program, which would allow energy improvement financing by commercial customers to be accomplished as a betterment assessment on tax or utility bills, were still being developed. Once the regulations are set, the MAPC could do presentations explaining CPACE to commercial property owners and City officials. **Mr. Myers** observed that energy improvements could increase the city tax base and revenues. It would be good to discuss CPACE with the City Treasurer Dept., to see how they feel about doing betterments of this sort. On one hand, a lien on a property makes a property less saleable, but on the other hand, the energy improvement funded by the betterment makes the property more saleable. **Ms. Wheeler** observed that Mass Development is the agency overseeing the program, but **Ms. Stout-Saunders** noted that ultimately most funding would come from private capital.

**“Drive Green” Electric Vehicle Incentive Program**

**Ms. Stout-Saunders** suggested that there be a public outreach campaign to alert people to the incentives available to purchase all-electric or hybrid-electric vehicles. She noted that Sue Hoague of Town Green 2025 had recently had an article in the Gloucester Daily Times promoting the program. She suggested a public service announcement or brief program on the local cable access television station might help get the word out.

**Mr. Myers** suggested that more charging stations would help the market for electric vehicles and might even increase eco-tourism on Cape Ann. There is now a cell phone “app” that can identify locations of EV charging stations. **Mr. Coogan** observed that EV range will soon increase to 200+ miles, which will mean that people can charge their EV’s at home, rather than needing so many public charging stations. He also noted that there are grants available for workplace charging stations, and we should get the word out on this.

**Other business**

**Ms. Wheeler** reported that the commission was invited to a meeting of the Ipswich Climate Change Committee at Ipswich Town Hall at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 13, on how municipalities can promote action on climate change issues.

**Ms. Wheeler** also reported that she had not heard anything further on her queries concerning establishing microgrids for power generation.

**Next meeting**

The next meeting of the commission was set for **Thursday, Jan. 26, 2017, at 7:30 p.m. in the first floor conference room at City Hall.**

**Adjournment**

On a motion by **Mr. McGeary**, seconded by **Ms. Wheeler** the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul McGeary