

MINUTES OF THE CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION MEETING
March 23, 2017
City Hall, 3rd Floor Conference Room, Dale Avenue

[These minutes were unanimously approved at the April 27, 2017 CEC Meeting.]

Members Present: Candace Wheeler, Linda Brayton, Tom Kiely, Bob Myers

Staff: Matt Coogan.

Guests: Ellen Leaman and Marcia Hart of 350.org

Public: Tom Mikus, Rockport Clean Community Task Force

The meeting was called to order by **Ms. Wheeler** at 7:30 pm.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Minutes for Feb. 23, 2017 CEC meeting not yet available for review and approval.

Member News: **Ms. Wheeler** reported that she, Matt Coogan and Chris Sicuranza (Mayor's Communications/Constituent Services Director) will tape a "Democratic Dialogues" Cape Ann TV show on April 4, discussing Gloucester's energy initiatives.

Staff and Member Reports/Updates/Discussions

Progress on Gas Leak Issue: **Ellen Leaman** and **Marcia Hart**, who have been working on gas leak issues through the non-profit organization "350.org", discussed the status of their efforts. They will not pursue the adoption of a Gloucester gas leak ordinance right now, but will first wait to evaluate whether proposed State legislation passes and whether local legislation is still necessary. The proposed bill is Senate Bill No. 1845, "An Act relative to protecting consumers of gas and electricity from paying for leaked and unaccounted for gas". (The leaked gas is currently charged to gas customers through their gas bills, so the Utility has no incentive to promptly fix leaks). Gloucester's State Senator, Bruce Tarr, was one of 30 sponsors for the bill, filed on 1/19/17. The bill would apply to the whole State, so we should see whether it passes before drafting local ordinances. Local support of the bill will be important in getting it passed. **Mses. Leaman and Hart** asked if the CEC and/or the City Council could do a resolution to support this legislation. **Mses. Hart and Leaman** provided the CEC members with folders including a copy of the proposed State legislation, A copy of U.S. Sen. Ed Markey's 2013 report titled "America Pays for Gas Leaks", and information about the energy initiatives and legislative agendas of 4 local organizations: 350 MassNorthShore; Citizens's Climate Lobby, Sierra Club Massachusetts; and the Environmental League of Massachusetts.

Matt Coogan explained that the Gloucester DPW is already planning to coordinate with the Gas Company, to request that whenever DPW is repairing/replacing utilities, the Gas Company should upgrade their old pipes and connections and fix leaks at the same time, while the street excavation is open. It was suggested that **Mses. Hart and Leaman** meet with Mike Hale, DPW Director for his input on a Gloucester strategy for eliminating gas leaks.

Open Meeting Law Training: All City officials were reminded that the Open meeting Law prohibits on-line/face-book dialogues between members on City business, outside of a posted public meeting.

Coordination with TownGreen2025 on Sustainability Fair, Sat., April 29. Mr. Coogan and the CEC members discussed whether there should be a booth at the Fair featuring the various City energy initiatives, in addition to Matt's presentation during the morning speakers program. There had already been a plan to have a Community Aggregation table staffed by **Stefano Loretto** from Good Energy, so people could preview the aggregation program. If people are aware that aggregation will be offered through the City in future months when prices become more favorable, they may refrain from signing on with other energy supply solicitations. (Many Gloucester residents have been deluged with offers from various energy suppliers).

Mr. Coogan reported that **Mr. Loretto** will draft a memo that will go into the City Council packets, explaining why this spring is not a favorable time to launch the community aggregation program, as National Grid's default prices for electricity supply are currently relatively low, making it harder for independent suppliers to beat their price AND include a higher proportion of electricity from renewable sources. Utility electricity rates are cyclical, and the price will rise before long. Good Energy will advise the City when the prices are more favorable for going out to bid on behalf of Gloucester customers. The information about what community aggregation means, and when it may start can also be made available at the Fair.

The CEC agreed that it would be worthwhile to have a "GloucesterGreen" table at the Fair, to show ALL the ways the City is working on energy efficiency and renewable energy. The GloucesterGreen table information will show that the City's overall efforts include community aggregation of electricity purchasing and promotion of the MassSave/National Grid and Action Inc.'s efficiency opportunities, as well as several other areas (electric vehicles, wind power, energy efficiency in City buildings and facilities, residential solar...). More detailed information on the Good Energy, MassSave and Action Inc. programs will be available at the separate tables for each of those programs. We will need CEC members to volunteer for shifts at the GloucesterGreen table between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on April 29.

Ms. Brayton moved, **Mr. Kiely** seconded and the **CEC unanimously voted** to have a GloucesterGreen table at the Cape Ann Sustainability Fair.

MassSave/National Grid 2017 Community Initiative Program

Ms. Brayton expressed the important guideline that while we are promoting MassSave audits and efficiency measures, we also raise awareness that Action Inc. provides free energy efficiency upgrades to low and moderate income households that meet eligibility requirements. She noted that an estimated 42-47% of Gloucester households could potentially meet eligibility requirements for fuel assistance and free energy assessments and efficiency upgrades, and that if a landlord has more than 50% of units in the building rented to income-eligible households, then the whole building may be eligible for free energy efficiency upgrades through Action Inc. MassSave will refer eligible households to Action Inc., and interested households that don't qualify for Action Inc.'s program should contact MassSave. **Ms. Brayton** provided copies of Action Inc.'s poster highlighting the many energy related benefits available at no cost through Action Inc.: fuel assistance, heating system replacement, insulation/weatherization, refrigerator/freezer/air conditioner replacement, and energy efficient lighting installation. The poster includes a simple chart showing eligibility by household size and income, and includes tear-off Action Inc. contact information tabs.

Mr. Kiely asked if there is a way to find out how many Action-eligible housing units have already received energy efficiency upgrades through Action Inc., to give a sense of the "penetration rate" of the Action Inc. program. **Ms. Brayton** said she had explored that question with Elliot Jacobson, who leads the Gloucester Action Inc. office (also the Vice President for Energy Services of Action Inc.). He has explained that it is not possible to state simple totals and percentages of eligible dwelling units that have

received energy efficiency upgrades through Action Inc., as both the services/measures offered and the eligibility requirements have varied over the 40 years of Action's weatherizing homes in Gloucester with Federal, State and utility funds. The efficiency measures, measure lifespan, and expenditures per unit also vary widely annually, and there are duplications in counting, as many homes have had service from different programs in different years.

Mr. Coogan reported that on March 15, he and Chris Sicuranza met with representatives of the CEC and TownGreen2025 to continue planning the "GloucesterGreen" initiatives, including the National Grid program to promote MassSave participation. The City has placed orders for program marketing materials showing 3 logos (City of Gloucester, TownGreen2025, and MassSave). The sign with the light bulb motif for measuring the number of households signing up for MassSave free energy audits is now on hand. National Grid provides some marketing materials at no cost, and gave us a budget for ordering materials like bumper stickers, pins and flyers. **Mr. Coogan** noted that Chris Sicuranza is very savvy about using social media (such as the widely-read Mayor's facebook page) to publicize the program. There will also be information on the InnovateGloucester web page, and pricing for ads has been requested from local radio station **WBOQ-FM** 104.9. **Mr. Coogan** reported that 100 households had signed up for audits in January, of which 70 came through HomeWorks Inc., an energy efficiency vendor that is on the MassSave certified list. HomeWorks is very active in our area, but it was emphasized that we are not formally partnering with HomeWorks or any other vendor. Interested households can choose any contract certified by MassSave, or have the audit done by MassSave's own contractor, ClearResult Inc. A program "kick-off" event for the press will be set up in April.

Mr. Coogan said he would reserve the Friend Room at the Sawyer Free Library from 6-8 pm for our May 25 CEC meeting, which will be devoted to a panel discussion of the MassSave energy efficiency promotion. We will invite Action Inc., HomeWorks, Mike Salmon and Cory Ricci-Munn to participate, and **Mr. Coogan** will arrange for National Grid's Dilena Diaz or her designee to be present as well.

Opportunities to pursue energy storage as part of Gloucester strategy?

Mr. Myers reported that he and **Mr. McGeary** had been exploring the rapidly developing possibilities for using energy storage technology as part of Gloucester's clean energy strategy. **Mr. Meyers and Mr. McGeary** spoke with representatives of GreenCharge Inc., a company developing energy storage solutions, who are currently using lithium ion battery technology. Resiliency during grid power outages is not the only value of having storage capacity. It could also make it possible to buy and store electricity purchased at off-peak hours, when price is lower. A few times per year, when utilities experience peak demand, they charge exorbitant "On Demand" rates for a brief period of time. GreenCharge knows the algorithm for determining when that "On Demand" pricing will occur, and can program the battery storage system not to recharge during the time that prices are highest. (<http://www.sustainableplant.com/assets/WP00010.pdf>) **Mr. Myers** recommended a recent PBS Nova TV program on "super batteries". As an example of how energy storage is being used for resiliency, **Mr. Myers** said that New York City had initiated a system of huge batteries mounted in shipping containers on flat-beds, so they can be moved around to different sites during power emergencies. A municipality can identify key facilities that need resiliency, and run their electric service through the battery system so it is always charged and ready to take over if the grid goes down.

New Business

C-PACE: **Mr. Myers** has an upcoming meeting with Bill Tobin about C-PACE (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy), which is an assessment-based financing system for energy improvements, whereby the property owner agrees to a betterment assessment on their property, and the betterment

assessment repays the MassDevelopment project financing over time. Legislation enacted in 2016 authorized cities and towns to adopt C-PACE, but the CEC previously postponed recommending local action until after the C-PACE guidelines are issued by the State. The guidelines (including terms and conditions) have been delayed again, and are expected in the Fall of 2017.

Local Sources for Electric Vehicles (EV's): Mr. Myers reported that he had reached out to the Sudbay car dealership in Gloucester about connecting with the MassEnergy incentives/rebates for purchase of electric vehicle. Larry Chretien of MassEnergy has spoken with Sudbay Inc., and the company does intend to participate, although they have not yet hired a technician to service Chevy Bolt EV's. (the type of EV Sudbay's would carry).

Report on Rockport Energy Initiatives: Tom Mikus, Rockport energy activist, said that information about the Cape Ann Sustainability Fair would be publicized through the Rockport schools and the League of Women Voters.

Action Items :

Mr. Coogan will reserve the Friend Room at the Library for May 25 CEC meeting/panel discussion.

Mr. Coogan will schedule a kick-off event for the press on the GloucesterGreen initiatives.

Ms. Brayton will invite Acton Inc. to be part of the May 25 panel discussion.

Mr. Coogan will invite National Grid to have a representative at the panel on May 25.

Ms. Wheeler will contact Homeworks, Mike Salmon and Cory Ricci-Munn to be on panel on May 25.

Next Meeting: The next CEC meeting will be Thursday, April 27, 2017 at City Hall, probably in the First Floor conference room.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Candace Wheeler