

## MINUTES OF THE GLOUCESTER CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, October 25, 2017, 7:30 PM

City Hall, 9 Dale Ave., 1st Floor Conference Room

(Approved unanimously at the December 20, 2017 meeting.)

**Attending: Commissioners:** Tom Kiely, Linda Stout-Saunders, Bob Myers, Paul McGeary, Linda Brayton, Candace Wheeler

**Staff:** Matthew Coogan

**Public:** Tom Mikus, Henry Jacques, Jerry Oppenheim

**Approval of minutes:** The minutes of the meetings of April 27 and Sept. 28 and the May 25 forum on our MassSave initiative were approved as amended. Approval of the minutes of June 22 was deferred until the next meeting of the commission.

**Community Aggregation:** **Mr. Coogan** and **Stefano Loretto** of Good Energy will update the new City Council on the program in January. **Mr. Coogan** explained that the decision to hold off was based on financial considerations. The goal of the program is to make it attractive for consumers to switch to green energy by providing savings as well as clean power. The current rate structure doesn't afford that opportunity. When rates are set again in the spring, it is hoped, the pricing structure will be more attractive. **Ms. Stout-Saunders** pointed out that Oxford and Millbury had recently joined the program and had realized significant savings. **Mr. Coogan** noted that those two municipalities are in a different region and that they have much lower capacity charges than we do in Northeast Massachusetts. He added that the new Salem power station will go online in the spring and that might cause a decrease in capacity charges. **Ms. Wheeler** echoed the sentiment of the commission when she said that we did not want the aggregation program to result in higher rates for our consumers.

**Gloucester Green:** **Mr. Coogan** reported that he made a presentation on the Gloucester Green initiative to School Committee earlier in the evening. He noted that the city is considering applying for another MassSave challenge grant next year, with a goal of having 1,000 Gloucester residents sign up for energy audits. Some discussion was held on improving our public awareness campaign with particular emphasis on using social media. The committee also discussed various complaints, glitches, and ways in the way the MassSave program was performing. **Ms. Stout-Saunders** suggested that commissioners submit complaints of which they were aware so that a an issues list could be compiled.

**Ms. Brayton, Ms. Stout-Saunders and Mr. Kiely** expressed concern that there may not be much enthusiasm for another campaign, but **Mr. Coogan** noted that the grant is pro-rated so that even if the city doesn't attain the goal, it would still be eligible for some funding.

**Mr. Coogan** noted other Gloucester Green efforts including selling LCD light bulbs at a Veterans Event on Nov. 10 at the Elks and having a table at Market Basket on Nov. 4 and 5. He said he intended to make a presentation on the Good Morning Gloucester podcast on Nov. 5.

**Report on MAPC Clean Energy meeting:** **Mr. Coogan** said he had attended a Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) clean energy summit focused on communities striving to become "net zero" carbon emitters. He said that 14 mayors signed a pact with MAPC to join in its efforts. A tool to measure a community's energy consumption was unveiled at this event.

**Community solar farm possibilities:** **Mr. McGeary** brought the commission up to date with efforts to establish community solar installations in Gloucester. Initial contacts have been made with the firm Resonant Energy in Boston, which helps set up community solar programs, and with houses of worship and community organizations in Gloucester that have expressed an interest in such a program. **Mr. Oppenheim** requested that any community solar project be cognizant of the needs of the city's low-income residents. **Mr. Coogan** observed that a similar program in Newton shared a portion of that city's income from its renewable energy installation with low-income city residents.

**Solar ordinance:** **Mr. Myers** asked about progress towards a solar ordinance in the city. **Mr. Coogan** said the issue was under study by city staff and would go to the Planning Board for its recommendation as well. He pointed out that the intent of the ordinance revision is to allow for solar energy generation as a primary use on a property--it is currently allowed as a supporting or accessory use.

**Hydrogen storage:** **Mr. Myers** reported on a conference he had attended in Beverly. He expressed concern that net-metering limits on municipalities might hinder progress in this area. **Ms. Wheeler** said that it was her understanding that net-metering would only be an issue if power were being fed onto the grid, power stored in any sort of storage device would not be affected. **Ms. Stout-Saunders** observed that electricity storage, whether as generated hydrogen or any other method, would be good for electric system resiliency, not just economics. **Mr. Myers** mentioned that Marblehead Municipality board member Joe Kowalik had suggested that Gloucester would gain benefit from exploring establishing our own municipal electricity utility. He offered to talk to the Commission if there was interest.

**Ms. Wheeler** suggested that the MAPC could help identify potential uses for energy storage solutions.

**City recognized:** **Mr. Coogan** also noted that the city has received a "Fast Fleet" award from the Center for Renewable Energy for its use of electric vehicles by municipal fleets and for providing charging stations. He said the city was ranked No. 8 in the US for its efforts.

**Next meeting:** The next meeting of the commission will be held in December with a date to be decided.

**Adjournment:** The commission voted to adjourn at 9:35pm

Respectfully submitted,

Paul McGeary