

MINUTES OF THE CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION MEETING

August 3, 2017

City Hall, 9 Dale Avenue, 3rd floor Conference Room

(Approved unanimously at the 12/20/2017 meeting.)

Attending: Commissioners: Bob Myers, Linda Brayton, Tom Kiely, John Moskal, Candace Wheeler (chair), Paul McGeary

Staff: Matt Coogan

Public: Susanne Altenburger, Dick Prouty

The meeting was called to order by **Ms. Wheeler** at 7:35 p.m.

Approval of minutes

Approval of minutes of prior meetings was deferred pending review by commission members.

Staff and Member reports:

Wind turbine opportunities: Mr. Myers spoke about siting of wind turbines offshore and potential opportunities for Gloucester. He said he had attended conferences on offshore wind including meeting with members of the Southeast Coast Fishing Fleet and Vineyard Wind, which is developing two wind farm leases in two blocks of ocean off Martha's Vineyard. He suggested that Gloucester could be a support base for service and maintenance of offshore wind facilities, given our history as a maritime center.

Mr. Moskal noted that there are currently four offshore wind turbine projects in process with a potential fifth one on the drawing boards.

Offshore wind potential: Mr. Myers said he had asked about wind envelopes off Cape Ann. In discussions with Vineyard Wind he said he was told that there is nothing on offer right now, that the proponents are seeking leases on current projects, but that once those leases were in place they might consider looking in our area. He said he had spoken with Al Cottone of the Gloucester Fisheries Commission about creating training schools to help mariners from Gloucester be ready when the occasion might arise. He also noted that Danish Oil and Gas, a developer of wind power, was moving two executives to Boston. Mr. Myers reported that the office of Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester) had sent him an article about areas where offshore wind farms could be sited without adverse impact on the fishing industry.

Mr. Moskal said that development of support services in Gloucester was a "chicken and egg problem." He noted that all leases and permits were under federal control and in federal waters and that Massachusetts has no great say in where facilities are developed.

He said he knew of no other lease blocks in Northeast. He said he thought the focus of current efforts was in southeastern Massachusetts for a number of reasons:

- Brayton Point power plant is an easy connection point for power generated offshore.
- The waters off Cape Ann are too deep
- Northeastern Massachusetts has inadequate electric distribution infrastructure and must build up its transmission system, which tends to follow development of power plants. There are fewer power plants in our region, with Seabrook station and Salem being the only major ones.

He agreed that we should be looking long term, but said he thought short-term prospects were not high.

Mr. Myers noted that he had also attended a second conference at which requirements of the industry including assembling pipe for offshore cables were discussed. He again noted that Gloucester's history as a port city and having a workforce skilled in working in the ocean environment might create an opportunity.

Community solar update: Mr. McGeary noted that a meeting was being held at St. John's Episcopal Church in Gloucester on Aug. 16 to discuss community solar power generation. A representative of Resonant Energy in Boston, which has brought such a project to fruition in Dorchester would be present. He noted that the lead customer in the Dorchester project was a church.

Carbon Pricing: Mr. Kiely asked if there was an update on proposals to incorporate carbon pricing business costs.

Mr. Moskal noted that carbon pricing is done through the RGGI (Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative)

program, which sunsets in 2020.

Mr. Prouty observed that under the program all money raised goes back to the consumer and that greener communities would get more back--not unlike the oil dividend in Alaska. He noted there were penalties for corporations and that the Chamber of Commerce was firmly opposed.

Mr. Kiely said that under one proposal employers get rebate based on number of employees. He said that the program's impact was being analyzed this year and that the Congressional Budget Office also has analyzed the impact of carbon pricing plans.

Clean Energy Curriculum: **Mr. Prouty** reported that Town Green 2025 had held a curriculum workshop with teachers from Rockport and Gloucester. Lessons for middle- and high school were developed to be delivered this year on a test basis and that by early 2018 the program, which involves all science teachers as well as teachers in the humanities, should be up and running.

Gas leaks resolution: **Ms. Brayton** noted that the City Council had passed a resolution calling for actions on gas leaks and praised the work of Mr. Coogan as well as Marcia Hart and Ellen Leaman in raising the issue.

Acceptance of 2017 Green Communities Grant by City Council

Mr. Coogan reported the grant had been accepted. The funds received will be used for retrofitting energy systems at Gloucester High School, the O'Maley Innovation Middle School and for an energy management system at the Beeman School.

Gloucester Challenge: Mr. Coogan reported that 350 assessments completed of the 1,400 that must be scheduled by the end of 2017 in order for the city to receive the \$40,000 incentive grant offered by National Grid. He outlined a range of outreach steps that had been taken to publicize the program.

Mr. Moskal suggested that a brochure publicizing the program included water bills would good idea. Other techniques were suggested to help publicize the program including:

- Town Green 2025 volunteers making personal phone calls.
- Videos on FaceBook, including the mayor's home assessment.
- Neighborhood or ward meetings in conjunction with City Councilors.

Greenhouse Gas Limits: **Mr. Moskal** reported on the so-called Kane decision issued by the Supreme Judicial Court. The court held that the state had not met its obligations to set regulations for greenhouse gas emissions as required by state law. He said there would soon be draft rules for emissions and hearings would be held over the winter. Current proposals call for a 30 percent reduction by 2020 and an 80 percent reduction by 2050, he said. He noted the eventual goal was to have a fully electrified economy.

Electric cars: **Mr. Coogan** reported that the Gloucester Police Department had added two new electric vehicles to its fleet. Both were funded under grants and would be used for the school resource officer and community policing. He also reported that the city's parking ordinance had been updated to cover who can park and for how long at the city's charging stations.

Solar ordinance: **Mr. Coogan** reported that under current zoning ordinances community shared solar facilities are not permitted. Large-scale solar systems and individual solar systems are permitted, but shared smaller facilities are not. Such a use requires a variance, he noted, which tends to discourage solar projects. He had previously distributed a document from the state Department of Energy Resources that offered suggestions for a model solar ordinance.

Ms. Wheeler offered to send a letter to the City Council and the Administration encouraging changes in our zoning ordinance to conform to a recent state law (Ch. 40A, Secs. 3 and 9B) that encourages development of solar facilities. **Mr. McGeary** said he would draft a letter for the commission's review.

Mr. Prouty suggested that any proposed ordinance should allow for solar-panel roofs on parking lots.

Mr. Myers suggested the reservoirs might also be good locations for solar arrays.

Electric Aggregation: **Mr. Coogan** reported that plans to seek bids for provision of clean energy under municipal electric aggregation were on hold pending the setting of rates, expected in October.

Mr. McGeary reported on a webinar that he had participated in that explained so-called “capacity charges” on electric bills. He noted that because the northeast region of Massachusetts has limited electrical transmission infrastructure, the distributors must pay a higher price to ensure that demand can be met.

Mr. Moskal noted that current plans anticipate flat to declining demand, so no new transmission lines are planned.

New business

Community solar in Lanesville: **Mr. Prouty** discussed a current community solar initiative under study. Using a model developed in Brewster, Mass., he is working with a group in Lanesville to develop a proposal. The plan calls for a non-profit corporation to buy the power and distribute the benefits among shareholders. He noted that he was working with Mr. McGeary and Resonant Energy to see how the two proposals might be joined together.

CPACE: **Mr. Myers** reported on efforts to create CPACE (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy) financing, under which energy improvements to commercial properties could be assessed as betterments to a company’s tax bill. He said he had approached bankers, and customers and begun a preliminary analysis to look at its potential in Gloucester.

Ms. Brayton recalled that there had been previous CEC discussion re: the possibility of working with and through MAPC on CPACE because, as our Regional Planning Council, it has the resources to manage such an initiative most effectively.

Next meeting: The next meeting of the Commission was set for **Thursday, Sept. 28, at 7:30 p.m. at City Hall.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul McGeary