

Minutes of the meeting of the Gloucester Clean Energy Commission
Thursday, May 31, 2018, 7:30 p.m.
City Hall, 9 Dale Ave., 1st Floor Conference Room
(Approved at the meeting of 8/9/18)

Attending: Commissioners: Linda Brayton, Linda Stout-Saunders, Debra Darby, Candace Wheeler, Paul McGeary, John Moskal, Absent: Mike Nolan.

Staff: Jeremy Price, Gregg Cademartori

Guests: Stefano Loretto of Good Energy LLC (by phone). Dick Prouty, TownGreen 2025

Public: Suzanne Altenburger, City Councilors Paul Lundberg and Jen Holmgren.

Approval of minutes

Approval of the minutes of the meeting of April 26, 2018 was voted as amended with the stipulation that Candace would provide her additions to Paul for completing the final version, prior to submission to the City Clerk.

Update on Community Aggregation of electricity purchasing

Mr. Loretto said that Good Energy anticipated receiving bids for electrical supply under energy aggregation between June 5 and June 7. If a bid is accepted, the city would have 10 days from the acceptance of the bid to send opt-out letters to all National Grid customers. The letter must be approved by the state Department of Public Utilities (DPU). Mr. Loretto has provided the DPU with a model opt-out letter to preview, in the hope that this will speed DPU approval when we submit our actual opt-out letter with our bid pricing data included. The opt-out period would start no later than June 18 in order for aggregation to be in place prior to the August reading of electric meters. He said National Grid's summer rate has been set at 10.87 cent per kilowatt-hour and that for a bid to be accepted the supplier's basic rate would have to be less than that. National Grid's winter rate is likely to be 12-13 cents/kwh. The City could choose a fixed rate deal or a stepped-rate deal, but all rates would be specified up front, with no floating rates. A bid that included the possibility of a rate rise after a few months might be acceptable, he said, in order to get the initial rate below National Grid's. The permissible amount of the increase would be specified in the bid, he said, and the supplier would be limited to one increase during the life of the contract. He said he anticipated a contract would have a duration of 15 to 27 months. The Community Development Dept. has already provided Good Energy with City logos and a calendar of events for aggregation publicity opportunities (Fiesta, Movie Nights, Block Parties, Senior Center events, etc.).

Member reports on conferences, meetings

Ms. Brayton reported that she and City Councilor Holmgren had attended a Citizen's Climate Lobby legislative forum. A significant part of the discussion focused on an omnibus bill on carbon pricing. The state Senate and House have differing versions of the bill and must vote on a reconciled bill by the end of July, she said. The proposal includes grants for energy efficiency efforts by communities to be paid for out of the revenue raised by the carbon pricing taxes. **Mr. Moskal** noted that there are already several market-based carbon-pricing mechanisms in place under the Global Warming Solutions Act and wondered how the proposals in the omnibus bill might work with or conflict with existing efforts. **Council President Lundberg** said that he and Councilor Holmgren were seeking guidance on whether the City Council should go on record as supporting the bills in the Legislature. After some discussion, it was decided that the Commission would seek further information on the bills before making a

recommendation. **Mr. Moskal** said he and Candace would arrange a meeting with state **Sen. Bruce Tarr** to discuss the matter, and report back to the CEC.

The commission received a request to support an environmental justice resolution from **Ellen Leaman** of 350.org. The legislation, known as House Bill 2913, would codify an executive order requiring environmental justice into law H2913. The preamble to the bill reads:

The Environmental Justice Act is intended to promote environmental justice, eliminate disparities with respect to exposure to environmental toxins, ensure access to environmental benefits within the Commonwealth, and implement Article 97 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth, which provides that the "people shall have the right to clean air and water, freedom from excessive and unnecessary noise, and the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic qualities of their environment; and the protection of the people in their right to the conservation, development and utilization of the agricultural, mineral, forest, water, air and other natural resources is hereby declared to be a public purpose."

Ms. Brayton also reported on a Coastal Resilience / Emergency Management Webinar in which she had participated. She said the focus of the webinar was on an "ecological approach" to managing the impact of rapid climate change and changing sea levels. Ms. Stout-Saunders said such "nature-based solutions" included restoration of salt marsh to act as a "sponge" or buffer against tidal flooding and storm surge. **Mr. Prouty** noted that there are already plans underway to restore salt marsh on the North Shore.

Updates on Community Development Dept.

Mr. Cademartori noted that the Community Development team would be meeting with Mr. Loretto next week once bids were received for aggregation.

He also reported that a Municipal Vulnerability Planning Action Grant was won by his Department.

He introduced the city's new staff planner, **Jeremy Price**, who will be working with the commission on energy issues.

National Grid/MassSave Community Initiative status

Mr. Cademartori mapped out events for publicizing *both* the aggregation and the MassSave initiatives, and said the city was also looking at by-neighborhood participation in the MassSave Green Communities program. Ms. Brayton suggested that the city issue a "consumer alert" to prospective participants noting that aggregation was not just another alternative energy supplier, and noted that the Action flier on 3rd party electric offers could be a model.

Joint efforts with TownGreen2025

Mr. Prouty reported that a conference call had been held with Resonant Energy LLC of Boston, who is assisting his group with developing a proposal for a community solar project. Among sites being considered are city-owned parcels identified by the 2015 Meister study and private parcels. Mr. Moskal asked who the power customer would be, and noted that all community solar projects need to identify a customer and a 3rd party developer/broker. Mr. Prouty mentioned the Brewster (Cape Cod) community solar project, where a for-profit solar installer worked with a non-profit organization that distributed electricity to low-income households. Mr. Moskal noted that we should consider whether the developer of a community solar program might be "poaching" the same pool of customers as were being targeted by our aggregation program. **Ms. Stout-Saunders** observed that regardless of the aggregation effort, the commission and the city had a long-term interest in increasing conservation efforts. **Mr. McGeary** said he would raise the issue with Resonant Energy to see if they had worked in areas where an aggregation program had been implemented.

Mr. Prouty asked whether funds from the National Grid Energy Challenge grant could be set aside for developing a curriculum on climate change for all types of learners in the city schools. He said that the curriculum project was now about \$6000 short of this year's cost of teacher training, and suggested that \$3000 from the National Grid funds would be a big help. **Mr. Cademartori** noted that there were a number of proposed uses of the \$19,000 award including another charging station for electric vehicles, an intern dedicated to energy conservation and climate issues, marketing of Energy Challenge program itself, including an incentive mechanism and geographic analysis for "ward competition" to spur participation. Ms. Darby noted that another worthy use for these funds would be solar crosswalks. The CEC voted to support giving \$3000 from the National Grid Funds to TownGreen2025 for its climate change curriculum. **Ms. Stout-Saunders** praised the "Change is simple" program curriculum about recycling, in which Town Green participated.

Mr. Prouty said he had also met with Sam Cleaves of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council on the proposal to develop carbon emission baseline data for the city. He said MAPC has a person dedicated to this effort and could get more granular data on carbon usage to help in applying for carbon-reduction grants or technical assistance. Mr. Cademartori noted that the City was already investing much time in crunching municipal electricity usage data required for the Green Communities program, using the MassEnergyInsight software, and that crunching data for the whole city could be a very large time commitment. **Mr. Cademartori** said that the city could apply for so-called "District Local Technical Assistance" from MAPC to help advance the program. **Ms. Wheeler** observed that getting sufficiently precise data would be a boon to conservation and energy efficiency efforts. She said she would invite Mr. Cleaves and Cammie Peterson of MAPC to a future meeting of the commission to discuss the proposal.

Town Green will hold an energy fair on Sept. 29, possibly at City Hall.

Mr. Prouty said his group is also pursuing efficiency and renewables opportunities with the YMCA for its project at the former Fuller School site.

Mr. Prouty said he had recently met with Sen. Tarr and members of the Chamber of Commerce on carbon sequestration. He characterized proposals as being in the exploratory stage but included work to expand the acreage of protected forests in Massachusetts, "natural" solutions being an excellent way to reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. **Ms. Stout-Saunders** observed that it was good to begin such efforts in "our own backyard." **Ms. Wheeler** asked whether wetland restoration was also under consideration. **Ms. Darby** noted that composting of food waste would help reduce methane emissions.

Draft Solar Ordinance

Mr. Cademartori noted that MAPC is now offering technical support especially on solar ordinances. **Ms. Stout-Saunders** said she had followed up with Emily Hutchins. of Beverly on that city's solar ordinance which has been approved. She said that Peabody *is* not currently considering an ordinance and that she was unsure whether Salem was or not.

MAPC's SolSmart program

SolSmart makes solar advisors from the Cadmus Group available to participating communities, and that for multi-community groups, one community must be the "lead town" and provide office space for the program. **Mr. Cademartori** said he had a concern about being a host community under the SolSmart program, since it would require outlay and staff on the city's part. He said that the city has submitted **an application and** "solar statement" for certification under the program. If Gloucester is approved, the program would start around January. **Mr. Price** observed that the city is already at the "bronze" level for SolSmart certification and that if and when a solar ordinance is passed allowing accessory solar as of right, we would almost certainly qualify for "silver."

Review/update of CEC Strategic Plan

The commission voted to hold a **special meeting on June 13, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. in City Hall** for the express purpose of reviewing our Strategic Plan. Ms. Brayton noted that the MassPowerForward checklist was a good source for thinking about the Strategic Plan. Its detailed list of municipal clean energy actions shows that Gloucester has already done many of them, highlighting what we still need to work on.

Other business

Mr. McGeary was unanimously elected vice-chair of the commission.

Ms. Brayton reminded CEC that they had adopted a policy limiting public comment to 5 minutes, with a CEC option to request an additional presentation/discussion at a future meeting.

Public comment

Ms. Altenburger referred to findings by CSIS.org (Center for International and Strategic Studies; An Update on Carbon Pricing) which found carbon pricing a "harsh corrective. "

Next meeting

The next regular meeting of the commission will be on **Thursday, June 28, at 7:30 p.m.** in City Hall

Adjournment

The commissioners voted to adjourn at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Paul McGeary

Vice-chair