



Clean Energy And Sustainability (CEAS)

MINUTES of MEETING

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Filed with Town Clerk:

DATE: **January 18, 2022** TIME: **7:00 PM**

PLACE: **Chelmsford Town Offices** ADDRESS: **50 Billerica Road, Chelmsford, MA 01824**

ROOM: **Conference Room**

MINUTES

Minutes of Clean Energy and Sustainability Committee Meeting

Meeting date: January 18, 2022 Chelmsford Town Offices, Room 200

Members present: In person: Badhri Uppiliappan

Members present, participating remotely: Sean McGuigan, David Sperry, David Drayton, Brittany Doherty, Caeli Tegan, Bethany Ward, Sally Johnston, Bernard Kosicki

Others present: Tom Amiro (remote), Pat Wojtas: Select Board Member (in person), Melissa Joyce: Town of Chelmsford Sustainability Manager (remote), Dave Langlais: NEEECO Representative (remote)

Meeting called to order by Badhri Uppiliappan, Committee Chair

Agenda Item: Meeting Minutes review

Chair Uppilippan requests comment on minutes from 1/04/22. No updates requested.

Member Johnston moves to approve minutes, member Kosicki seconds.

Minutes approved as worded.

Agenda Item: Public Input

Tom Amiro discussed the following topics:

- Offering to submit a warrant option to increase the percentage of clean electricity in Chelmsford Choice as the default.
- Efforts in town to encourage more people to opt for more green electricity including posted flyers at town trailheads and electric chargers.
- The adoption of more green electricity has been low despite these efforts.
- Discussions with Paul Cohen about changing the green electricity amount in the original warrant indicated that it was not allowed and that someone would need to go to Town Meeting.
- There is 1.75 years left on the current contract and he feels that it should be straightforward to introduce this warrant given the town's 2050 charter and that the surrounding towns have also increased their green energy percentages as their default.

- That there is always an opt out option for people should they not want to participate.
- He offered to write up the warrant and get the needed signatures to bring it up at Town Meeting.
- Member Ward mentioned that increasing from the basic (20% green, default) to the standard (60% green) would be an increase of only a cent per kWh.

Agenda Item: New business: MassSave partner Vendor Presentation: NEEECO

NEEECO representative Dave Langlais joined the meeting and explained the following:

- How MassSave vendors can help reach net zero goals
- Who they are: MassSave contractor that provides energy savings solutions for communities
- Providing home energy solutions with in and out of house experts
- Has worked with Waltham, Lexington, Cambridge, and done a direct mail campaign in Westford about heat pumps
- That they work to try to cover a diverse demographics and historically underserved communities with multilingual capabilities (Spanish and Portuguese were mentioned) along with CAPIC and Action Inc.

Mr. Langlais also explained that he is an outreach manager for NEEECO which reaches communities in the following ways, but feels that face to face interactions are the most effective:

- Canvassing
- retail locations
- being out in the community to educate about MassSave and local energy programs
- direct mailing
- digital campaigns
- webinars
- integrating social media presence with the town's
- providing live status updates on the community's progress with monthly and quarterly reports

Mr. Langlais asked the committee what we were looking for and what Chelmsford's goals are and Chair Uppiliappan explained our committee's history as well as Chelmsford's net zero 2050 goals.

A discussion began covering the following questions and topics:

- What are the success rates of the varying types of outreach campaigns?
 - Face to face are the most successful for engagement but digital campaigns reach more people
 - Face to face seems to outperform digital and direct mail
- Mr. Langlais recommends that towns engage in an RFP (request for proposal) bidding process for projects
- What other companies exist that are similar to NEEECO?
 - HomeWorks Energy (Woburn)
 - Revise Energy (Haverhill)
- Mr. Langlais feels that NEEECO is the best in class and they do not partner with other HPC's (Home Performance Contractors).
- He noted that NEEECO has less turnover than other local HPCs
- NEEECO does work with heating and cooling partners such as Plumbing 128 and Climate Zone
- They have about 10-15 heating and cooling partners
- How does NEEECO ensure quality control with their partners?
 - NEEECO performs frequent check-ins and follow up inquiries
- Does NEEECO provide a guarantee on the work performed by partners?
 - No guarantee but if there is a problem they will work with the customer and partner organization to find a solution if there's a problem
 - The check in and follow up process is not a formal process
- NEEECO's in house staff is about 50-60 employees with about 12-13 auditors which varies throughout the year based on need
 - There tends to be a lull after winter months with a resurgence in interest in the summer

- NEEECO preforms infrared and blow door testing using a thermogun and blower door test with insulation and sealing at no cost to the customer
- The training for auditors is between 2 and 3 weeks and results in BPI (Building Performance Institute) certification, then the new auditors shadow a more experienced rep for a month or so
- A NEEECO auditor performs an average of 2-3, sometimes 4 audits a day and in 2021 they performed approximately 4500 audits.
- They have the capacity to perform 6000 audits in a year but the pandemic impacted last year's numbers
- NEEECO will cover costs of outreach efforts with a town with co-branded marketing and campaigns. When towns have funds to do the outreach they can be without the co-branding.
- How does NEEECO handle community in person outreach in a way that instills confidence in their services, a.k.a. how will people know they aren't a scam?
 - NEEECO tries to educate in their interactions with people
 - Not there to do a "hard sell"
 - Explain to people that they already have paid for their services through their energy bill and MassSave program that is already on their energy bill
 - Making it clear they are open to answering any questions
 - The town can let public know the campaign is happening alerting them that the NEEECO members are in the community

Agenda Item: Committee business - Old/Unfinished

Discussion topics included:

- Goal to set for 2022 Fall Town meeting to get people to move to the mid-tier option for green energy allocation in Chelmsford Choice today to let people know that as your electricity bill is going up we want to offer you a mechanism to reduce your needs through this program as a tactic.
- Hearing from Peregrine Energy about what kinds of strategies or requirements or planning in terms of municipal aggregation programs
- Member Ward put together a working document with information from Peregrine Energy's website comparing neighboring communities that have signed up through Peregrine energy and comparing their numbers. Committee members should look at this before our next meeting with Peregrine
- Proposal from Mr. Amiro - do some research and planning with Melissa Joyce and Paul Cohen to understand the best way to move ahead. Mr. Amiro's offer is great but we will try to address this as part of our committee work first with recommendations to the Town Managers and Selectboard group and moving ahead with the warrant.
- Why not ask for 100% renewal as the default if it's the same amount of work and of minimal cost?
 - The highest percentage currently in MA is Lowell at 45% because of a bad deal for normal aggregation rates
 - Perhaps we go in high as a strategy and negotiate down
 - Going in too much may cause people to drop from the program all together
 - Is there existing research on what the best way to approach this is?
 - Could start lower and then go up each year a certain percentage
 - Right now our rates are cheaper than National Grid
 - Could have marketing blitz when our rates are cheaper to encourage sign up
 - Must get the numbers prepared before we are able to speak about specifics
 - Chelmsford goes to raw energy market every 2-3 years to lock in rates so consumers won't see the same type of rate fluctuations as National Grid
 - BayState consultants procure Chelmsford's gas and electricity
 - the DPU has VERY specific rules about advertising cost savings, we cannot claim cost savings and it is a big deal (in a negative way) if we do
 - Despite there being not enough clean energy sources at the moment for everyone to go 100% clean energy, perhaps Chelmsford can be a leader and with more and more rec's the demand will be demonstrated in the market.

Publishing the Committee Vision/Mission - Webpage status

Basic website is posted and live

Member Ward will find relevant links for the page along with the following suggestions from the committee:

- solar production in town
- MassSave
- Meeting minutes and agendas
- Mission statement
- Scorecard information eventually

Review of Scorecards/report concept - continue discussion on next steps

Member McGuigan presented findings of working group exploring Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory Tools

Chelmsford CEAS Committee
Air Emission Inventory Tool Selection

Recommendations and Possible Action Items

Recommend to initially use MAPC Community GHG Inventory Tool

- Results will be more directly comparable to our neighboring towns allowing us to accurately benchmark ourselves
- Data-sets are more state and local-specific as opposed to ClearPath which uses more nationally accepted emission factors
- Feedback from Andover and Natick is that this tool is "easy" to use and other town contacts may be able to help (Natick has offered to provide a tutorial)
- Spreadsheet suggests what sources to access to get data – "helps you along"

Possible Action Items

- Consider joining ICLEI for Programming/Networking/Training Opportunities
- Consider Preparing a Request for Proposal to Have a Consultant Prepare our Initial GHG Inventory
- Consider working through the North Middlesex Council of Governance (NMCOG) to request support from MAPC on their tool is needed. Select Board Member Pat Wojtas (our committee liaison) is Chelmsford's rep to NMCOG and Westford is making a similar appeal to NMCOG

Some Pros and Cons of Each Tool

Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Community GHG Inventory Tool

- Free to Use
- Used by many of our neighboring communities (Andover, Arlington, Westford, Natick etc.)
- Limited support available as Chelmsford is not a member of MAPC

ICLEI ClearPath

- \$1,200 membership to ICLEI for first year \$600 subsequent years but that membership also provides ClearPath support, planning/training opportunities and networking forums
- ClearPath has forecasting modules that can be used to evaluate proposed GHG reduction opportunities
- Used by Wellesley (for over ten years) and Acton

Air Emission Inventory Tools

Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Community GHG Inventory Tool

- Microsoft Excel-based spreadsheet
- Designed according to Global Protocol for Community-Scale GHG Emission Inventories
- Allows the tracking of emissions from energy, transportation, and waste

ICLEI ClearPath

- On-line software platform
- Allows the tracking of emissions from energy, transportation, waste, consumption, and forest/trees sequestration
- Integrated into various national & global tracking systems, like the Carbon Disclosure Project and Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy

Discussion included:

- Needing to make sure our data is good to make the tools accurate and useful which has the potential to be very time consuming
- Where to get sequestration data - the conservation committee may have some useful information
- Potentially joining ICLEI which has a cost and using the free MAPC tool, or using both tools to see which one we like better
- The two tools use different types of data so do not have comparable results
- MAPC tool is more specific to Massachusetts and is more regionally based
- What towns are in MAPC and that Chelmsford is in NMCOG (Northern Middlesex Council of Governments)

Next Steps:

- Plan a session with Natick on the MAPC tool and how they use it for 4 people maximum (to avoid a quorum), hopefully to be recorded for others to learn how to use it.
- Potentially by the next meeting if possible to schedule it

How much money of the low impact development grant is available?

- 40,000-50,000 for this committee
- Money could go to the consultant to help make the report on updating zoning laws
- NMCOG could also supply a small portion of that

Update from Chair Uppilippan on his planning board input at the session on 1/12/2022 for the Umass Lowell West Campus development zoning overly.

- We want to put net zero constraints on the the zoning overly itself
- Received feedback that it will be going through the state approval process
- May want to have a public letter writing campaign to help support more strict zoning laws than are and may be in place.
- Don't want to be confrontational as Tramwell Crow is open to cooperation in this area
- Zoning already includes commercial solar zoning for top of building solar
- Another member of the public brought up the upcoming warehouse building and if CEAS was considering how that may be sustainable - Chair Uppilippan indicated that we will be looking into that more formally later

Progress towards Presentation Deck about CEAS

Discussion included:

- Next meeting will have a draft of the slides ready
- Members will need to update spreadsheet with their individual slide content by Friday 1/21/2022 before the next meeting
- Melissa Joyce and members Kosicki, and Doherty will review member's submitted content
- Other members may also provide edits without opinions in a column labeled with their name
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Agenda Item: Brief update

Commercial / Industrial - Learnings regarding Technology and services for adoption, effectiveness and challenges.

Chair Uppilippan and members Kosicki and Drayton met with retrofit building energy consultant about current technologies available to decarbonize buildings.

- They provided good information to address the concerns about heat pump usage in cold climates.
- Mitsubishi with cold package can heat at temperatures as low as -27F degrees
- Also had solutions to aesthetic concerns
- Right now airsource is 2.5x more expensive than gas systems because gas is artificially kept low
- Properties could be worth more in the future if using a heat pump

- If air conditioning is also included in the pump installation the price is comparable or better than a separate furnace and AC install
- Also will save money on not having to install gas lines

Agenda Item: February 2022 meeting dates (Wednesday) Feb 2, 16th

February meeting dates: 2/2/2022 and 2/16/2022

Discussion about March dates, three that month: 3/2/2022, 3/16/2022, 3/30/2022

- Member Sperry offered to help Clerk Johnston with meeting minutes for one of those meetings as she feels she will not be able to manage the workload of three meeting minutes in a month.

Potential April dates: 4/13/2022 and 4/27/2022

Agenda Item: Any other topics

Member Drayton inquired about Chair Uppilippan's concern about Chelmsford Choice prices seeming to be higher than what solar seemed to cost to produce the electricity.

- Nothing further to report
- Needs more investigations about that to understand it

Member Drayton offered to put together a small presentation about what is suggested that we do right away from the playbooks we have reviewed to get to net zero - he will plan on doing presentation at the next meeting 2/2/2022.

Action Items for Members:

- Chair Uppilippan to discuss (investigate?) NMCOG grants
- Members McGuigan, Kosicki, and Melissa Joyce to schedule training with Natick on MAPC tool
- Members should update individual slide content in the spreadsheet by Friday 1/21/2022

Meeting closed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sally Johnston, Clerk