



Clean Energy and Sustainability Committee

Minutes of Public Meeting

Filed with Town Clerk:

DATE: **Tuesday, May 17, 2022** *TIME:* **7:00 PM**
PLACE: **Town Offices** *ADDRESS:* **50 Billerica Road** *ROOM:* **200**

MINUTES

Prepared by Sean McGuigan, Clerk

MEMBERS PRESENT: Badhri Uppiliappan (Chair, in person), David Drayton (Vice Chair, in person), Sean McGuigan (Clerk, remote), Bern Kosicki (in person), David Sperry (remote), Caeli Tegan (remote),

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brittany Doherty, Jordan Vachon, Bethany Ward

OTHERS PRESENT: David Righter (NMCOG), Christopher Haley (Chelmsford Sustainability Manager), Pat Wojtas, Chelmsford Select Board

Meeting Minutes

There were no comments on meeting minutes for 4/26/22 or 5/3/22. The minutes were approved and will be sent to the Town Clerk for posting.

Public Input

None

NMCOG Presentation on Greenhouse Gas Inventory

David Righter joined the meeting to answer any further Committee questions about the draft Greenhouse Gas Inventory that he prepared and presented to the Committee in April. David Righter provided an answer to David Sperry's question on whether the Town's solar projects are accounted for in the tool by stating that solar projects do not get accounted for in the baseline GHG inventory because solar panels do not produce emissions when operating. Any extra power produced by the Town's solar arrays, along with other offsets like purchasing renewable energy credits (RECs), do not get incorporated into the baseline inventory either. However, he stated that solar energy capacity and generation (and RECs) in the Town should be reported in your climate/net-zero plan.

During the meeting, Bern asked a question about GHG emissions from waste collection. David Righter stated that it is accounted for in the inventory but generic state-average emission factors are used since the Town has not performed a waste characterization. Badhri had questions about the NMCOG survey. David Righter stated that out of the 16 responses NMCOG received, seven of the nine NMCOG communities were represented and the respondents were a mix of town staff and committee members. David Drayton asked how best to leverage this data. David Righter said that this data is best used to track improvement over time and to inform action items or goals by focusing on the largest source of emissions. In Chelmsford, the largest emission sources are passenger vehicles, residential buildings, and commercial buildings and should be the sources to focus on.

David Righter asked the Committee where we are in the process. Badhri stated that we will be writing a strategy document as we are currently working on zoning changes through the Town grant/project with Weston & Sampson, MAPC playbook guidelines, and working on the Chelmsford Choice program, among other initiatives. David Righter suggested researching what the towns of Arlington, Acton, and Westford have done. David Sperry asked how to obtain past annual Green Community reports. David Righter suggests that a waste characterization survey can be done at a later date to improve data. Chris Haley stated that he would reach out to the Green Communities Regional Coordinator to obtain past reports including financial/budgeting information on Town's solar projects.

Badhri suggested that NMCOG could organize a seminar for Town leadership on the topic of the social cost of carbon and how to use those costs to make decisions. David Righter said he would start investigating that topic.

Update on MassSave Partnership Discussion

Chris stated that an RFP would be required for the MassSave/Town partnership and questioned why the Town would want to proceed with just one vendor. Bern stated that if we select one vendor, we have influence over their campaign, how they advertise, to minimize multiple vendors from contacting people in the Town. Chris stated that with one vendor, you are limiting yourself and the vendor might not have enough capacity to service the Town. Bern stated that a Memorandum of Understanding would be done that could be cancelled for poor performance. Chris suggests that we should research if other towns have done similar projects. Badhri stated that the Town of Beverly issued a RFP and we have that document. Dave Sperry suggests that Chelmsford had a bad experience with Next Step Living who had some sort of partnership with the Town. Badhri suggests that when a similar project was done in 2016, no RFI was issued but a MOU was done. Caeli suggested reaching out to someone from Beverly to see how their project went. Chris stated that he would put additional thoughts to writing and would try to find these older documents. Chris spoke to several people at Town Hall and DPW who stated that a RFI is not appropriate and RFP would be the right mechanism. Bern stated that he would research what other towns like Westford have done.

There was continued discussion about whether this mechanism constitutes a "preferred vendor" to the Town. Chris asked if we've explored other options to getting audits done by all residents/businesses. MassSave's program seems to be the least expensive way for residents to get audits done. David Drayton stated that getting bids from multiple vendors would provide us with some ideas on how the program should be shaped and that we can vet the companies to make sure their outreach is appropriate. Chris cautioned that we can't fully vet the companies. Continued discussion on the pros and cons of one vendor or multiple vendors occurred. How do we decide how multiple vendors split up the audits in the Town? Discussion about fundraising. Chris believes the Town should not be involved in fundraising and suggests the Committee could be the boots on the ground to promote town audits. Badhri pointed out it may be difficult to engage town committees/schools directly. Chris will reach out to Darlene Lussier, the town accountant, to see if there is available unspent grant money. Continued discussion about multiple vendors reaching out to residents. Sean suggested we take a step back and consider other options and listen to other stakeholders. Dave Sperry made a motion to table discussion until a later meeting. David Drayton seconded the motion and all voting in favor except Bern who abstained.

Chelmsford Choice Program Discussion

Sean had an email conversation with Marlana Patton from Peregrine regarding how to make changes to the Chelmsford Choice program. Marlana stated that if Chelmsford wanted to change their current Chelmsford Choice program by either adding additional options or changing the default option, the Town Manager and Select Board would be able to do that in the next contract without going to Town Meeting.

Dave Sperry also talked to Sam Chase from the Finance Committee and he stated that if a Town article was written appropriately, the Finance Committee would likely support a more green default option. Badhri asked if Marlana stated why the Town went from two options to three options in 2020. Sean stated Marlana did not state why but Bern indicated that he thought the Town added the third option because the “Green” option increased in price and the 60% option provided a more cost-effective choice for Town residents. Badhri suggested we could model some potential choices at potential cost price points while also showing reduction in GHG emissions so stakeholders see the emission reductions at the different price points. Badhri stated that he would try to put together some thoughts for next meeting.

David Drayton asked Pat Wojtas if the present Select Board could approve a plan to move all Town residents to 100% Green Energy over next 2-3 contracts. Pat stated that the current Select Board could not encumber future Select Boards with contract commitments so negotiations would likely need to be done with future Select Boards.

Meeting was adjourned.