

CITY OF CONCORD
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF JANUARY 7, 2021

The Concord Energy and Environment Advisory Committee met virtually via Zoom at 7:00 p.m. on January 7, 2021.

Attendees: City Councilor Rob Werner, Carl Cooley, Chuck Willing, Dorothy Currier, Jessica Forrest, Nick Babladelis, City Councilor Meredith Hatfield, Jennifer Galbraith, Jerry Eaton

Absent: Henry Herndon

Staff: Sam Durfee (City Planning)

Guests: Don Kreis (Office of the Consumer Advocate and Concord resident), Patrick Roche (Good Energy, Director of Innovation), Robert (Bob) Hayden (Standard Power, President), Philip Carr (Good Energy), Emily Manns (Standard Power), John O'Rourke (Good Energy), Stefano Loretto (Good Energy), Daria Mark (Good Energy), Kimberly Rawson (Waterville Valley Energy Committee)

I. Welcome and Introductions

7:04 – Rob Werner opens meeting. Reads remote access information.

Introductions given. Guests present from Standard Power, Good Energy, and Waterville Valley Energy Committee.

Review of meeting minutes from December meeting:

- Rob W.: LED lights will be paid for by Unitil (50%) and on-bill financing from the city (50%).
- Jerry said he did not move to adjourn since he was not at the meeting.
- Rob W. will make the changes.
- *Meredith H. moved to approve minutes with these 2 edits. Unanimously approved by role call of committee members (7:12).*

II. Municipal Properties Update

- **Hall Street solar project**

Rob W. provided an update on the planned solar array at the Hall Street Wastewater Treatment Plant. Revision Energy has promised that red lined contract will be at the city legal department by tomorrow, 1/8/2021. The contract had been delayed on the Revision Energy side for reasons unrelated to the Concord project.

II. Concord LED Streetlight Project

- **City Council Hearing (January 11th, 2021)**
- **Public Input/education**

Rob W. provided an update on the Concord LED Streetlight project. The project is on the city council agenda on Monday night (1/11/2021) and welcoming testimony in favor of the project. The project switch out regular street lights for LED. Unutil to cover half the cost and city will cover the other half through on-bill financing. Want to inform public about the project and the benefits. Will save the city quite a lot of money and use less energy.

Meredith: On Monday, wants to discuss some details with the council. Wants to point out place(s) in city already with LEDs. Understands that Main Street has LED lighting as a result of the redevelopment project. On Jennings drive (near Penacook street) they have made a big difference for safety. Lights are directed downwards and they brighten the ground but don't seem to affect the upward direction so seem to be consistent with Dark Skies. SPS also has LEDs.

Rob W. suggests talking with city PIO and media about benefits of LED lighting in order to inform the public.

Meredith: During the Main Street Project people went downtown to check out lights. Maybe we can present a similar opportunity this spring (observing COVID safety measures).

III. Weatherize Concord 2021

- **Subcommittee Update**
- **Kick-off timing**

Jessica gave update on status of the Weatherize Concord initiative. The aim of the initiative is to inform Concord's public about a program from NH Saves, administered by the utilities, to increase the efficiency of built structures through insulation and more efficient technology. Residents and businesses can sign up for the program and receive an audit and rebates to offset the cost of upgrades. Improving energy efficiency and reducing consumption is a key part of Concord's 100% renewable and carbon emissions reduction strategies. It also helps to make houses more comfortable and saves customer's money in the long term by reducing energy consumption.

The last Weatherize subcommittee meeting was before the holidays, on December 18, 2020. We introduced 2 new volunteers: Elizabeth (Bizzy) Willing, with expertise in campaigns and communications, and Olivia Cattabriga with expertise in graphic design. We reviewed and commented on drafts of a logo for the campaign, designed by Olivia. Also discussed shifting the launch date of the campaign to late February/early March. The subcommittee meets Fridays at noon by Zoom, and people interested in becoming involved are welcome.

Jerry: Ben Stephenson and Gary Miller from Unutil will be on the net Weatherize subcommittee call on 1/8/2021.

Rob: Wants to ask utilities about funding for things like a main street banner. Henry said they would be happy to pay for banner. There is a 30-day process for requesting approval to hang a banner on Main Street.

Jessica said there was a question earlier about whether utilities will pay for staff time for a fellow to support the campaign.

Jerry to ask utilities about funding prior to meeting and we can discuss more on Friday.

Rob will talk about the Weatherize Concord campaign on Monday

- I. Community Power presentation**
 - **Standard Power and Good Energy**

Rob W. introduced the speakers, Robert (Bob) Hayden, President of Standard Power and Patrick Roche, Director of Innovation at Good Energy. They will be speaking about Community Power, which is a relevant consideration in how Concord can reach its 100% renewable energy goal.

Please see attached copy of their presentation, Community Power for Concord (CommunityPower_CEEAC_01072021.pdf).

Questions/Discussion:

Nick: What they see as future strategy for recs. What % can we anticipate from regional green power vs. Texas wind?

Patrick: Seek to deliver consistent economic value and create new local renewable energy (ex. class I recs in MA) – projects can receive grants from PUC.

Robert H.: There lots of creative options for community power

- Package energy needs from Keene/Concord to improve negotiating rate
- Biomass
- Microgrid. Working on energy storage solution with a company in MA. Bringing an energy storage docket to NH PUC on January 25th to improve policy environment for this here.

Patrick: large and small commercial accounts do join but often find better rates in market.

Robert H.: Standard Power does work with commercial customers in Nh.

Meredith: if the city wants to implement, what are the steps?

Robert H.: Similar to Keene. Issue an RFP.

Robert H.: Will Concord be weighing in on the energy storage docket at the NH PUC. Sees storage as necessary for achieving 100% RE goals.

Rob W.: hadn't considered. Need to talk about it.

Meredith: would signing up for Community Power impact our ability to invest in solar for municipal use

Rob H/Patrick: Doesn't think so...not closing off options. Strategies can be complementary

II. New Hampshire Legislative Session

- City of Concord positions on bills

Rob: General comment on legislation. In the past city has taken specific position on energy bills. One particular example is HB106 – net metering program for municipalities. There will be others coming to the floor that we should pay attention to – such as those that seek to repeal the RGGI and RPS programs.

We have an opportunity to weigh in on net metering which should help Concord. HB106 is bipartisan and Republican led. Should we continue to advocate on Concord's behalf?

Should we examine the relevant bills and present to city administration at early February city council meeting so they authorize us to take positions?

In the past, city manager would sign letters in support or against of legislation.

Open for discussion

Don K.: expects to see a bill from Representative Vose that will try to eviscerate state's energy efficiency program.

Meredith suggests coordinating with other municipalities to build a coalition on the topic. Discuss with Clean Energy NH.

Jerry: notes changing nature of bills, so how deeply involved in the process do we want to be

Rob: lots of resources to plug into such as Clean Energy NH, etc.

Rob: Beyond the legislature, there is the PUC triennial energy efficiency program up for renewal. Some think city needs to be more vocal on this

Don K: New triennial plan should already be in effect. On December 28 said they don't have time to rule on this and gave themselves up to 8 more weeks to deliberate and so current level of funding should stay in place. Fear inertia will kick in. There are legal issues with this decision. Implementing would only bring us close to mainstream of new England.

Rob: This issue at the PUC isn't legislation but a program we should support. Can we put that this front of city council by early February?

There may be a new PUC commissioner soon.

Rob: How to proceed - will connect with people at Clean Energy NH and put together a list prior to end-of-January CEEAC meeting of energy legislation and programs. We can discuss which we think we should advocate for.

III. New Business

- **Committee membership/vacancies**

Rob: There are 3 CEEAC vacancies. Think about filling vacancies – possibly by January 27th meeting.

New meeting schedule – fourth Wednesday of every month. Next CEEAC meeting will be on 1/27/21.

8:57: Jerry makes motion to adjourn, Meredith seconds. *Unanimously approved.*