

CITY OF CONCORD
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF JANUARY 27, 2021

The Concord Energy and Environment Advisory Committee met virtually via Zoom at 7:00 p.m. on January 27, 2020.

Attendees: City Councilor Rob Werner (chair), Nick Babladelis, Carl Cooley, Dot Currier, Jerry Eaton
Jessica Forrest, Henry Herndon, City Councilor Meredith Hatfield, Jennifer Galbraith

Absent: Chuck Willing

Staff: Sam Durfee (City Planning)

Guest(s): Olivia Cattabriga

I. Welcome and Introductions

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

Rob moves to accept January 7 CEEAC minutes. Carl and Jerry second the motion. Unanimously accepted after role call by Sam.

II. Municipal Properties Update

- **Hall Street solar project**

Rob: No updates on Hall Street solar project since the last meeting. Still waiting for revisions to contract from Revision Energy. Discussions ongoing. Meeting next week between Beth Greenblatt (City energy consultant) and Attorney Kennedy

III. Concord LED Streetlight Project

- **Public Input/education**

Rob: LED streetlight project proposal accepted by City Council. RFP will be going out for a contractor. Wants to make sure there is public education associated.

Meredith: Willing to talk with Brian Lebron (Finance Director) about timing of RFP.

Sam: City Planning is looking to incorporate LED lights into site plan regulations as part of the overall code update.

IV. Weatherize Concord 2021

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

Weatherize Concord is a campaign to encourage Concord residents and businesses to sign up for energy efficiency programs offered by NH Saves in order to reduce energy consumption and associated costs,

reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve home comfort and health. The campaign supports Concord's energy and emissions strategy.

Jessica: Weatherize Subcommittee has been planning the campaign: we have a second round logo, draft website, plan for a banner, near final version of proposal to utilities to cover marketing expenses.

Meredith: Went onto Unutil and Liberty websites to try to access annual consumption data, as will be required of applicants to the NH Saves program. There is an issue with ease of customer access to their annual electricity and natural gas consumption data. Both require the customer to add monthly consumption, which is likely to serve as a barrier. Meredith thought it would be good to discuss with Don Kreis (consumer advocate) about talking to PUC about ease of consumption data access.

Jennifer: spoke with a subcontractor that complete weatherization work. It is hard for a general customer to access their data. Could have a subpage of our website on how to interpret bill.

Jessica: Can we talk with the utilities about the application process and whether customers can bypass the energy consumption step and request the utilities or subcontractors look up this information? Perhaps utilities or contractors are doing this anyway to double-check applications. We also need the help of NH Saves (utilities or contractors) in giving us progress reports number of projects in Concord and what stage of the process they are at.

Carl: Important to think about outcome data.

Next steps: (1) Jessica to talk with utilities about whether it's possible to bypass the consumption data requirement for NH Saves applicants, (2) If not, what are their recommended steps to access data and how can we make it easy as possible? (3) If consumption data access is still believed to be a significant barrier to access the program, Meredith to talk with Don Kreis about raising the data access issue at PUC.

Jessica showed draft Weatherize Concord web pages. Next step is to create web domain: WeatherizeConcord.org . Hope is to launch website a few weeks prior to campaign launch.

Olivia Cattabriga (graphic designer for Weatherize Concord) joined the call
She has been working on a Weatherize Concord logo and produced a second draft circulated prior to meeting (attached).

Discussion indicated approval of the logo.

Henry: *Motioned to accept the logo Dot seconds. Role call by Sam: Logo unanimously accepted.*

Rob: has been doing research on banner printing and city application process. There is a certain amount of time required for this process.

- Step #1: Need a mock up of the banner to accompany application to city.
- Step #2: Spectrum Marketing has produced a quote to print 2 streetwide banners, post and remove them.
- Step #3: We have a proposal to the utilities regarding payment.

Rob had discussion with Tom Aspell – who thinks it will be easiest process-wise if the utilities can pay Spectrum directly for their banner services. Then, the city will recognize the utility support at a subsequent City Council meeting and in city marketing communications

Jerry: What other things should go on the banner? logos could include weatherize concord, city of concord, NH Saves, Liberty, Unitil, Weatherize Concord Title and website location (Weatherize concord.org)

Campaign launch date: group agreed that mid-March is realistic given banner preparation time frame. At that point, triennial energy efficiency plan may be clarified. A late winter start date may be more appealing to many participants because they can leave homes more easily during work as weather warms. (Regardless, the contractors follow COVID safe protocols).

Next step: Olivia to work on a scale mock-up of the banner with these elements and circulate to the subcommittee.

Jessica: Our near final proposal to utilities includes the purchase of the website domain and printing of marketing materials (including yard sign printing expenses), in addition to the banner. There is also graphic design time in there. Wonders if we need to add a budget line for ad placement?

Jennifer:

- Maybe not real advertising. Thinks we can use our digital media networks.
- Also, thinks testimonials can be effective. Perhaps Horizon contractors will have stories to tell.
- Conversation with the contractor Newell and Crathern indicated a limit to number of jobs that they can do in a year. She has reached out to them and Quality Insulation, but and needs a few more for Concord.

Jerry: Thinks we should leave our goal at 80 Concord homes/businesses touched and if we get higher, all the better

Jessica to follow up with utilities with proposal and questions.

V. New Hampshire Legislative Session

- **City of Concord positions on bills**

Rob: At the last meeting we discussed identifying which bills at the State House would affect the City negatively or positively. Mayor Bouley has also asked what the City of Concord should weigh in on at the state level.

Rob had pulled together and circulated a list of legislation, as follows:

Legislation to oppose

House Bill 315 – *Revisits the previously approved Community Power (municipal aggregation) “bulk purchasing” rules.*

Henry: HB 315 guts and sabotages community power in the state, including opportunities Concord could have with it to increase renewable energy available for purchase. Community Power NH is putting together a petition against the bill and will circulate it. The Science, Tech and Industry hearing Feb 8 at earliest. Please sign petition to oppose this.

House Bill 213 – *Reduces every class of clean energy production that is part of the current RPS. The RPS goal for New Hampshire would be reduced from 25% to 8% by 2025.*

Nick: Concerned about this one. It eliminates thermal requirement AND guts the broader Renewable Portfolio Standard. Oppose.

House Bill 549 – *Suspends the implementation of the Energy Efficiency Recourse Standard (EERS) and the reduce the Systems Benefit Charge (SBC) for utilities. The SBC helps to fund energy efficiency programs delivered by utilities.*

and

House Bill 351 – *Changes the authority to increase the Systems Benefit Charge (SBC) from the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to the legislature.*

Meredith: These we should oppose together and make a statement about cost effectiveness of energy efficiency measures.

Dot:

- Concern about **614 FN (fiscal note)** – no renewable programs at all.
- Also, GOP has suggested ad hoc exec sessions any time. Can muscle things through Executive Council to House, sometimes on the same day. It is unprecedented.

Legislation to support

Senate Bill 71 – *Establishes a Commission to develop emissions reductions goals for the State of New Hampshire.*

Rob: This has bipartisan support. Had a hearing yesterday.

House Bill 106 – *Authorizes political subdivisions (city, town, county, school district) to establish larger clean energy projects via net metering. Low-income solar projects are included. There are multiple net metering bills that have been introduced in the House and Senate that support expanded net metering, and legislation may be consolidated.*

Rob: HB 106 allows net metering for municipalities and is really relevant to what Concord would like to do. If it passes, we could have a solar array on the landfill ASAP.

It has bipartisan support. Governor is for it. Hopes Senator Whitley would support it. Believes we are well set up for it to pass.

Clean Energy Procurement (no bill number yet) – *Requires New Hampshire to procure up to 800 MW of renewable energy, including 600 MW of offshore wind with the remaining 200 MW for solar and small hydro facilities.*

Rob asks for a motion to approve the package of bills to support and approve. Meredith makes motion. Henry seconds the motion

Meredith: Question: Are we supporting **Senate Bill 71**? Also, Nick mentioned one other bill: “**HB 172:** Establishing greenhouse gas emission reduction goals for the state and establishing a climate action plan”

Dot: Thinks it’s a good idea to make a statement in support. Every other state in NE has binding bills

Rob to include HB 172

Meredith amends motion: *Motion to approve the package of bills to support and oppose, with the addition of HB 172 to approve.* Role call by Sam: Unanimously approved

VI. New Business

- **Committee membership/vacancies**
- **2021 planning session**

Rob: 3 vacancies on CEEAC. Need to find people to join us.

Carl: Should we reach out to people that used to come to in-person meetings but haven’t been coming to remote meetings?

Rob: We could also look to the list of stakeholders that we built while working on the strategic plan.

Henry: Mentioned social media as a skill the CEEAC could use.

Jerry: Has been talking with someone that ran energy efficiency programs from Eversource working with commercial customers. Graduated from London school of economics. She may be interested in getting involved.

Rob suggested inviting her to come to CEEAC meeting next month and to join Weatherize Concord subgroup. Rob will also look at CEEAC email list for potential candidates. Please communicate with Rob about potential candidates.

Rob: Would like to have a CEEAC Strategic Planning meeting to discuss what we need to get moving in 2021.

Henry – maybe put it off until Weatherize is underway?

Carl: Agrees – weatherize requires a lot of our time right now, but we can do strategic planning in a few months

Jerry: Agrees.

Meredith – Would love to work on composting. SWAC met end of 2020 but didn’t get into other topics. Talked mostly about purple bags. May be best to look at composting and general waste reduction as Casella contract renewal comes up for renewal in the next few years.

Rob: Strategic planning in April maybe? Will bookmark and then revisit it.

Henry: Announced that Hanover is going to be first member of the Community Power NH Coalition, followed shortly by Lebanon and Nashua.

Jerry: Moves to adjourn, Henry seconds the motion, Role call by Sam: Unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned. (~8:40pm)