

COMPREHENSIVE SUSTAINABILITY & ENERGY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 8, 2019

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Comprehensive Sustainability & Energy Committee was held on January 8, 2019 at 7:00 pm at the Harvey Wheeler Community Center. CSEC members present were Janet Miller (chair), Julie Kleyn (clerk), Brad Hubbard-Nelson, Jerry Frenkil, Sharon Jones, Doug Sharpe, Karen Gibson and Bob Shatten. Also present was Kate Hanley and Melissa Simoncini. Kevin Neijstrom and Eric Reinhard joined the meeting at 7:30pm.

1. Welcome visitors

Janet welcomed Melissa Simoncini from the Water & Sewer Division of Concord Public Works.

2. Approval of minutes

Brad reviewed with the group his edits of the December 4, 2018 minutes. Sharon added her comments. The minutes were approved as revised.

[Melissa Simoncini took a group photo for the Town website.]

Janet confirmed that the next meeting will be Tuesday, February 12. Also that the meeting after that would be March 5.

(#5 on meeting agenda) Future CSEC Projects

- Landscaping event. Janet opened a discussion about a potential community spring event to promote sustainable landscaping and minimize fossil fuel and water use.
- Possibly to be held at Willard School (which has sustainable landscaping) or Thoreau School (which needs sustainable landscaping)
- Melissa said that Sustainability and CPW Water & Sewer division have together applied for two mini-grants, one of which would fund the creation of sustainable lawn alternative demonstration gardens and the other to fund a speaker series and sustainable landscaping guide for residents. If funding is secured, some of it may potentially be used for CSEC's landscaping event.
- The group had suggestions for other organizations that would likely be interested in tabling at this event such as ConcordCAN, Quiet Communities, White Pond Advisory

- Committee, CMLP, OARS: For the Assabet and Sudbury Rivers, Concord public library gardening/seed bank group, local nurseries/landscaping companies and more.
- Jerry said he has worked with the White Pond Advisory Committee and believes they would be very interested in this event as they have had on-going problems with algae caused by run-off from local residences.
 - Melissa said it's important for people to see firsthand what sustainable landscaping looks like and supported Janet's idea of a map showing examples of alternative landscaping maintenance methods around town for people to visit.
 - Jerry asked who the audience is for this event so that marketing and promotion can be targeted. The group confirmed that Concord residents are the main focus. Whether or not to include children and target families is under discussion. This would involve more work (children's activities) but also potentially attract more families.
 - Karen said she works with a non-profit organization, Grow Native MA, that educates people about the importance of native plants and encourages people to use them in landscaping. This could dovetail nicely into the CSEC event.
 - Brad raised the question of funding the event (especially in the event that Melissa's mini-grant application does not pan out) and Kate asked for an estimate of expenses that she could review with the Town for possible funding aid.
 - Possible dates for event: weekend May 4/5 or May 18/19. Calendar check and enquiry into location use are needed in order to fix the date
 - Julie said the event could echo the Cooler Concord Fair with tables for different topics (e.g. Cutting water usage, reducing pesticide use, alternatives to grass, etc). Other organizations could be invited to have a tabling presence, with it being their responsibility to turn up and set up.
 - Melissa said it's important to help residents understand the connection between carbon footprint and water consumption. Water requires a lot of energy!
 - Karen offered to head up a sub-committee to organize the event. Janet and Julie volunteered to join her.
 - Jerry will ask Carmen whether White Pond Advisory Committee would like to be involved with the event and Bob will ask the library the same.

3. Chair reports, announcements

a. Cooler Concord:

Janet reviewed the final tally on Cooler Concord rebates. Approx ¼ Cooler Concord Fair attendees followed through on actions they had expressed interest in at the Fair. Total rebates (Town and CMLP combined) added up to almost \$50k.

Annual Report:

Brad reviewed his comments on the annual report Janet had written. The report needs to be cut down to two pages.

Brad asked whether the Cooler Concord content has been transferred to and re-purposed for the Town's new sustainability website. Kate said as much as possible.

Brad added some specific numbers (for example, 350 tons of CO₂ saved) so that readers can understand the concrete impact that CSEC's projects are having on the Town's carbon footprint

b. Publicity for CMLP's EV support program

Janet shared data provided by Laura Scott of CMLP. The data showed that 188 EV owners in Concord had applied for a rebate through the MOR-EV program. Charts showed an increase in applications for rebates since 2014 and predicted a steady increase to continue.

Janet said that Mark Scribner, ENE EV specialist at CMLP, would like CSEC to promote EVs and the associated rebate programs as much as possible. Janet reminded the group that she had sent out an email to all with EV information to be shared with our personal contacts. There is some concern at CMLP that people are not taking advantage of the rebates and not making the important switch to charging off-peak.

Janet asked Julie to submit a short write-up about this to the schools.

Bob asked about storing energy using electric bus and cars. Janet responded that this has been considered but the focus right now is on educating residents about EVs and directing them towards money-saving rebates.

c. MCAN webinar on better building codes

Janet asked if anyone were interested in attending a meeting about codes at Harvey Wheeler January 16, 7-8pm. Brad explained there is currently a discussion about a third tier of stretch code and net zero code.

Eric said MA is ahead of many states with building codes.

4. Sustainability Director's report (Kate Hanley):

Kate said the final report on the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program has been completed and submitted to the State (it's also posted on the website). The report summarizes volunteer residents' responses, ideas and opinions from the workshops. A third new video about water usage has also just been added to the website (also posted on Twitter and FaceBook). Kate asked the group to check this out and "like" it, as more followers are needed. Kate was recently interviewed and an article about her work on sustainability appeared in the Concord Journal last week.

Kate said that an application for a partially funded intern (college senior or grad student) has been approved for a June start. She anticipates that the intern will work on a project about reducing emissions within Concord's commercial sector.

Kate shared that the Green Communities grant has been used to provide hybrid conversion on COA's Nissan vans as well as supply 5 municipal buildings with LED upgrades, amongst other things. These projects are wrapping up now so that the Town will be eligible for the next round of grants.

Kate requested help with tabling events for the National Grid (NG) Community Initiative, a goal of 12 events this year (with a pass in January). These can be CSEC events or just tabling/speaking at other related events. NG is trying to get all natural gas customers to do energy audits. The challenge is that MassSAVE will not share customer data with us so we don't know which residents have already undertaken an audit.

Kate is working on dates for events and getting publicity materials ready.

Bob said he would go to the CMLP meeting on January 9th.

6. MassEnergize: Brad's report

Concord's incorporation into the MassEnergize program will be completed by end of January.

Currently, Brad is working with Wayland volunteers to decide which web platform is best, given factors such as scalability, supportability, customizability, cost, professionalism of appearance and content.

Kick-off meeting will be February 6th at 7pm (Concord and Wayland groups) to cover:

- Planning
- Events
- Volunteers
- Customization of website
- Playbook development (for other local towns)

7. Update on window insulation project with Concord Middle School (Brad):

Brad is working with Dave Davidson (CMS science teacher) and they are halfway through the "window frame" project, the entire cost of which is under \$400 (paid for by CMS).

First the 8th grade students were taught the science behind insulation, then they measured their windows. Dave and Brad will now construct window frames based on the students' calculations. Bob and Julie both said they may be able to help with this. The students will then complete construction of the window frames, install them and record data (temperatures) to be shared in class.

Brad will let the group know the date for working on the frames.

8. Liaison Reports:

Jerry reported that he had attended a Climate Action Advisory Board (CAAB) meeting and shared two observations.

- CAAB had enlisted Rivers & Revolutions high school students to conduct scaled-down audits with 26 Concord businesses with the goal of highlighting simple ways these businesses could save energy and money.
- Kate presented a climate action plan outline which created a lot of discussion regarding content, structure and operations. Kate said her goal for this committee is to make a climate action plan, and connect the dots between goals and baseline, Kate shared examples of other climate action plans from area towns, and recommended that CAAB consider hiring an advisor to help. Jerry said it would be helpful for CSEC to also see other towns' climate action plans as a means of understanding better the energy challenges and the work to be done.

There will be a CAAB meeting at Harvey Wheeler soon to discuss this further.

Sam Lines not present for CMLP liaison presentation.

9. No public comments

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:55pm

Minutes taken by Julie Kleyn (clerk)