

COMPREHENSIVE SUSTAINABILITY & ENERGY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 17, 2022

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Comprehensive Sustainability & Energy Committee was held on February 17, 2022 at 7:00 pm via Zoom. CSEC members present were Jerry Frenkil (Chair), Karen Gibson (Clerk), Sharon Jones, Janet Miller, Mike McDonald, and Hany Teylouni. Also present were Amanda Kohn (Sustainability Director), Matt Johnson (Select Board), Brad Hubbard-Nelson, Dean Banfield, and Laura Davis.

1. Welcome and Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

2. Approval of minutes from Jan 13th

Karen noted minor corrections to the minutes. Janet moved to approved the minutes as amended. Doug seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Chair's Update

Jerry shared an idea to create an award for a Sustainability Champion. Jerry and Amanda will discuss the idea with Courtney Eaton, Chair of CAAB. Jerry deferred the rest of his updates until the Sustainability Series discussion later in the agenda.

4. Director's Update

Deferred.

5. Proposed Solar Warrant Article

Dean Banfield (73 Walden Terrace, Concord), representing himself, described the proposed solar warrant Article 38 that he, Charlie Parker and Jerry drafted. The aim of the Article is to urge CMLP to get back in the business of developing solar energy in Concord on municipal land and buildings; and to do this in a planned way, on a schedule, with a big picture view of how to achieve goals in the Climate Action Plan. In 2010, CMLP put out a plan for 25MW of solar by 2030 by putting up 5MWs every five years. Since then, the Town has not put solar on any municipal buildings or schools. Article 51, passed at Town Meeting, attempted to bring the Town in alignment with state goals. In 2017, in response to Article 51, CMLP adopted an eight-year strategy to get to 2030, but without solar. The 2021 CAAB Plan added a target of 20MW of solar by 2030. The questions are: Is local solar important for the Town? What can we do locally? Are we doing our share? Challenges include whether the financials are acceptable—underlying debt issuance, payback period, cost per kW, maintenance costs; and the sustainability of our distribution systems and periods of solar peak saturation. Benefits include not

offloading infrastructure burdens to others; benefits of local renewable energy if married to energy storage; and if we deploy solar, rates are predictable. The urgency of addressing climate change and limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degrees makes the case for solar now. The opportunity for financial benefit is good. Concord currently gets 6% of power portfolio or 7.5MWs from solar so we are looking for 12.5MWs more. The Town needs to find one more utility scale site in order to meet the 2030 goal of 20MWs.

The discussion focused on how in the near future, homeowners with electric cars can help out (vehicle to grid). There are opportunities for solar over parking lots, and on rooftops, but there will still be need for some utility scale structure. Jerry pointed out that the warrant article is urging the Town to develop an action plan--in the development of that plan, the public could ask that the areas where arrays could be put up wouldn't impact open space. There should be stronger incentives offered to encourage individuals to put solar on homes. Jerry suggested that this article is a good starting point to get more solar on municipal land and buildings and asked if CSEC would support it. Hany moved that the committee recommend affirmative action of the Article 38 at Town meeting. Janet seconded. On a roll call vote, the motion was approved unanimously.

6. Concord Business Partnership Meeting

Mike gave a report on his meeting with the Concord Business Partnership on Feb 2. Presenters included Pamela Cady and Laura Scott, CMLP; Mike on behalf of CSEC and National Grid; Amanda kicked off the meeting and described to the group the role of CSEC and how CSEC can help CBP. Mike spoke about National Grid incentives. The business community raised concerns that the environmental/energy/sustainability world is difficult to navigate and suggested that a single point of contact would be helpful; Amanda is taking on this role. Amanda added that she followed up with Jen Clark after the meeting and forwarded resources to the group in response to questions raised. This was a good introductory meeting with good discussion. There was interest from composting to retrofits, so there is follow up that CSEC can do. Amanda suggested that in addition to a Sustainability Champion Award, we consider a business award as well.

Mike left the meeting at 8:00 pm.

7. Sustainability Series

Jerry presented the schedule of events. February 25 is the deadline for each of the events to be confirmed. On March 1, the materials need to go to the printer. CMLP will do the first mailing on March 20.

a. Keynote

Janet has confirmed details with Prof Emanuel, including that this would be a hybrid event with a live audience and possible questions from Zoom participants. Janet has contacted Minute Man Media to help out with A/V. Brad raised the point that there are a number of organizations that offered to co-sponsor—should they be listed on the promotional materials? He also mentioned that a member of the Sunrise movement had contacted him and offered to moderate or co-moderate the event.

b. Arbor Day Celebration

Amanda gave an update on Arbor Day. In the past the Garden Club has held a tree donation, planting, and dedication with CPW on Arbor Day; and they have this in the works again for 2022. This year the tree donation will be in West Concord. Amanda is working with the tree warden to determine the location for the tree planting. The Garden Club is happy to have CSEC co-sponsor and list the event in the Sustainability Series. Amanda has ordered seedlings to give away at the event, and through the Libraries. Jerry suggested that it would be good to also hand out materials about climate change and how individuals might take action. Could we hand out the Your Sustainable Home Now pamphlet with each seedling? Or a list of actions and resources?

c. CSEC - CCHS event

Brad met with CCHS and the Green Team about an idea for students to do some projects that could be displayed at a festival as the start of a bigger Challenge, but this maybe too much to do adequately on April 30.

Laura Davis (33 Garfield Rd, Concord), speaking on behalf of Mothers Out Front, added that there could be a community-oriented climate and sustainability festival on April 30 as part of the Sustainability Series. Mothers Out Front could organize this event with CSEC and the Green Team at CCHS and other community partners. The event would be outdoors, family friendly, focus on climate and sustainability, and bring together many different groups. The location is still to be determined.

d. Your Sustainable Home Now

Doug reported on plans for an event focused on the topics in the Your Sustainable Home Now pamphlet—an in-person event at Harvey Wheeler on May 11, 2022. The format will be a presentation and dialogue. The auditorium would be set up theater style with tables at the back for Mothers Out Front, CSEC, Abode, and others to engage after the presentation. Janet suggested including CMLP to talk about available rebates. Sharon suggested National Grid to talk about natural gas. Amanda thought it might be interesting to bring the home tours to this event – presenting case studies and personal testimonies. Janet raised the possibility of having modern high efficiency building techniques demonstrated at the event.

e. Heating and Cooling with Heat Pumps

Jerry described an event organized by Energize Wayland on electric heat pumps. The format was a brief intro, followed by a presentation by someone from the Heat Smart Alliance, then a few Wayland residents who described their own experiences, and wrapping up with Q&A. The HeatSmart presenter for that event has agreed to present at an event for the Sustainability Series. CSEC would need to line up a few people who have heat pumps for the agenda.

f. EV charging (Janet)

Janet suggested the EV event be in person at Harvey Wheeler, and include some EVs outside. The program format will be a presentation on the basics of charging; and tables with people offering information and answering questions about charging at home, apps that can be used to find locations for charging when away from home, and trip planning. There was discussion about broadening the topic beyond EV charging. Brad suggested that if it is ride and drive, there might be more of a draw. Or individuals might be willing to bring their own EVs for people to see and compare the cars. Amanda mentioned that Mark Scribner is willing to help out. This event will be Saturday, June 4th at 2:00pm.

Hany left the meeting at 9:15 pm

g. Cooler Concord support

This topic was deferred.

h. Promotion

This topic was deferred.

8. CSEC and CAAB Coordination

This topic was deferred.

9. Liaison reports (Janet: EVWG, Doug: CAAB)

This topic was deferred.

10. Public Comment

Janet reported that the MassDEP EV Incentive Program has grants for a total of \$13 m for 306 DC fast charging ports in Massachusetts. Concord has been awarded \$100,000 for charging ports.

The next CSEC meeting will be March 3rd.

Janet moved to adjourn. Sharon seconded. The committee adjourned at 9:30 pm.