

COMPREHENSIVE SUSTAINABILITY & ENERGY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 18, 2021

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Comprehensive Sustainability & Energy Committee was held on March 18, 2021 at 3:30pm via Zoom. CSEC members present were Douglas Sharpe (chair), Jerry Frenkil, Julie Kleyn (clerk), Janet Miller, Brad Hubbard-Nelson, Sharon Jones, Karen Gibson and Hani Teylouni. Also present were Director of Sustainability, Kate Hanley, Brian Foulds, David Bearg and Pamela Dritt.

1. Welcome

- Doug welcomed visitors: Brian Foulds (member of the CMLP Board), David Bearg and Pamela Dritt, Concord residents.

2. Approval of minutes from February 18th Meeting

- Sharon and Brad had minor comments. Brad moved to approve the minutes as amended and Janet seconded; all approved as amended.

3. Next CSEC meeting dates

- Thursday April 15, 3:30-5:30pm
- Thursday May 20, 3:30-5:30pm
- Doug asked if any members were interested in taking over the roles of CSEC chair and clerk. Jerry is considering this. Janet pointed out that the committee has until June to make these decisions.

4. Announcements:

- Sustainable Concord Coffee - March 31st 8:00am - visit ConcordCAN.org to register
- Sharon McGregor "Net Carbon Sink not Net Zero will get us out of Climate Crisis"
- Town Election - next week - don't forget to vote for the Select Board
- CMS Building committee - March 31st 7:00pm -- public forum

5. Planning Board Liaison Update (Karen)

- At the last meeting, the Board was finalizing the language of zoning bylaw amendments (not directly relevant to CSEC).

- New project: reviewing FAR (Floor Area Ratio) in homes in the light of the trend of replacing small homes with very large homes. Landscape, ecology impact, carbon footprint, increased home prices, and energy usage are all being considered as part of this review.
- The Board is exploring offering incentives such as for net-zero homes, and is mapping their reviews onto the relevant issues in the Town's long-range plan.

6. CMS / CMLP Liaison Update (Jerry)

- The CMS building sub-committee approved the architect's plans which have now been presented to the Select Board.
- Jerry finds the architect's sustainability goals reasonably good, except there is no commitment to net-zero, only to net-zero *ready*.
- The CMS sub-committee views it as 2 projects: building the new school and building solar PV for school.
- Aiming for new school opening 2025. Budget is \$80-100 million including making the new building net-zero ready.
- Jerry said construction costs remain a key issue. Hany pointed out that if solar installation costs are built into the construction budget, costs would need to be trimmed somewhere else.
- At the latest CMLP meeting, Town Manager Steven Crane, said a project manager should be appointed to promote and implement solar PV for the new school.
- Jerry expressed concern that CMLP prefers a PPA project. If this is not financially viable, it's not clear what would happen in its stead. Kate said this is still under discussion.
- Steven Crane suggested that instead of the CMS sub-committee working with CMLP, Kate Hanley work with them on this.
- Kate is currently working with Dave Wood at CMLP on feasibility and hiring a PV consultant. The feasibility study should be concluded in a couple of months.
- Brian said that at the recent CMLP meeting, it was made clear that CMLP will take care of solar PV on the new school (CMLP gave the Fenn School 3 options when they were installing solar) and believes that Concord can become a model for other towns.
- CMLP is also working on a grant application for more level 3 charging stations.
- In 2018, CMLP had voted not to participate in the biomass resolution, but now this has been approved by the CAAB board (March 17 meeting) with one modification. Approval is currently now in the hands of the Select Board
- Jerry thanked Brad for his work on the biomass power issue and said it's receiving a lot of attention.

7. Presentation on the benefits of having hybrid & natural ventilation in the CMS new design (David Bearg)

- Concord resident, David Bearg, shared a slide show and presented an argument for why hybrid ventilation is a great choice for the new middle school. David has long been concerned about indoor air quality.
- A lot can be learned from the Town's experience with the Alcott School building project. This new building overheated from the start. No air conditioning
- David conducted a full analysis of indoor air quality and recommends that the new middle school have hybrid ventilation and heat pumps for energy conservation, climate resilience and thermal comfort.
- Jerry asked whether David had spoken with the CMS building sub-committee.
- Sharon asked what the current status of the design is and Kate responded that it is still in general concept stage. Schematic design is the next phase and then there will be more discussion about systems.
- CMS presented to CAAB March 17.
- Kate urged all to attend the Middle School Building Committee's community forum March 31 at 7pm (via Zoom)
- Concord resident, Pamela Dritt asked why there is a diesel generator proposed for the new school. Brian clarified that this would be solely for emergency power (infrequent use), not daily use. CMLP does not know the size of battery power needed, Once it is understood what sort of back-up power is required, it will become clear whether a generator is needed or not. Pamela D felt strongly that a diesel generator is not needed. Brad pointed out that this is not a CSEC project and we cannot have any influence here

8. Update on Cooler Concord/MassEnergize (Brad)

[Cooler Concord](#) - our local site

- Haven't yet publicized widely, holding off to get more testimonials and team members. Want to urge more community leaders to sign up, add to action totals, and leave testimonials. So far it is "like pulling teeth"
- Current plans: (seeking help)
 - Assemble lists of service providers for solar, weatherization, heat pumps and other? Spreadsheet with logos and contact info to import into site.
 - Add a couple missing actions

[MassEnergize](#) - the non-profit and platform

- Hosted the Sustainable Middlesex annual meeting with ~270 attendees (over 500 registered) - great exposure
- A lot of communities getting started including Lexington, Acton, Boxborough, Medfield, Weston and four "Cooler Communities" (school initiatives based on the Cooler Concord fair)
- Looking forward to working with interns (CCHS and MassCEC) on programming and communications. Will be hiring first permanent staff soon.
- Platform Proposals (to get your feedback):
 1. User to user communication - more social network; let people know what you've done; allow questions from other users.
 2. Showing action impacts in different ways (Tons, trees, vehicles)

3. Update HomePage regularly with “What’s New” (new actions, events, promotions, and progress towards community goals)
4. Implementing “Baseline carbon score” into platform, with a carbon calc api.
5. Enable anonymous users (via ip addresses) to take advantage site, without some features (teams and communication)
6. List and rank service providers, based on distance, # users or otherwise:

- Brad said more testimonials are needed, he would like to see all CSEC members contribute a testimonial. The site needs a broader list of providers.
- Brad shared his screen to show the new website’s functionality. User-to-user connections are of key importance. Brad wants our feedback on the website.
- Julie asked who had curated the list of providers because she would want to see recommendations and be advised who to use. Brad said the site cannot legally recommend a specific provider and Hany said that the number of installations a provider has done would be valuable information. Also ratings from homeowners would be useful (as opposed to Google ratings)
- Brian said there is a publicly available list by town from the state’s SREC program showing which installer was used, names of homeowners and other details.
- Janet said houses in historic districts cannot put solar panels on the building side that faces the street.

9. Update on Select Board’s disposition on biomass resolution (Brad)

- BioMass resolution is moving forward. Approved by CAAB (March 17).
- The resolution will pass to the Select Board for approval at their next meeting.
- Kate said CSEC should consider supporting the resolution. Brad offered to take the lead for CSEC.
- Modifications/edits need to be done and forwarded to the Select Board.
- Brian will send the latest version to Doug to share with CSEC.

10. EV working group update (Janet)

- Last meeting was early March.
- The group is working on counting the number of EVs using VIN data, some programming was incorrect. This will be rectified.
- Kate was working on how much CO2 levels have decreased since the pandemic has caused fewer vehicles on the roads.
- The MUD (Multi-Unit Dwelling) pilot program will continue next year. \$24k is budgeted for this, including \$5,500 for site visits. MUDS with 5+ units with commitments to buy EVs will be prioritized.
- April 22 is Drive Electric Earth Day (virtual). More details to come.

11. CAAB Liaison Update (Doug)

- Doug did not go to the meeting last night but listened to the recording.
- Under discussion: RECs and how RECs work for CMLP. In December, it was put forward that RECs do not have the impact originally hoped for (CMLP bundles power with RECs).
- Also covered was Kate's review of the GHG inventory. Doug said this was very impressive and would like Kate to present same to CSEC at our next meeting. Kate said final reports will come in and she will share these with CSEC.
- Kate said one big takeaway is that the Town achieved a 22% reduction (the goal was 25%) of carbon emissions by 2020. She added that we are a long way from reaching our 2050 goal of 80% reduction in emissions (more like 30% at present rates).
- CMSBC presented at CAAB meeting, worth watching on YouTube if you are interested
- New information - CMLP planning to bring SolarPV on day 1
- Jake Swenson on home energy scoring metrics - some interesting ideas about how they could be brought to bear, such as requirement on home sales

12. Update on Concord Clean Comfort Campaign (Brad)

- Coaching program is up and running
- Nicely-updated web site (concordcleancomfort.org)
- Growing number of contractors (10) on [approved installer list](#)
- Brad asked that CSEC members check out concordcleancomfort.org
- Hany said he checked out the vendor list and selected a vendor

13. Review plans for how best to distribute the “Sustainable Home of the Future” pamphlets (Doug)

- Kate said the library, which is moving more towards becoming a sustainability hub, has a mobile outdoor book stand and we could perhaps put our pamphlets there for people to pick up when they are collecting books.
- Julie reminded all that she has pamphlet holders and posters.
- Kate said she has been working with Reenie Cunningham who has an active role in sustainability at the library.

14. Discussion / Update about further development of Concord Heat Pump Installation & case studies

- Doug asked Brad to share the list of homeowners to do case studies with.
- Doug asked how long case studies should be. Kate said don't worry, she can trim and edit as needed.
- Brad said the project should be wrapped up by June. Interviews, draft write-ups by May 1, with photos if possible?

- About 18 more homeowners are on the list. Can each CSEC member take on 2-3 case studies (each about 4 hours total work)
- Kate said run your first draft by homeowner then send to her for finessing and she will run final draft by homeowner.
- Julie said it can be awkward asking people for their renovation costs, maybe they don't want that in print. Janet said her interviewee was really open about sharing all the numbers. Up to the homeowner.

---- Bob Shatten joined the meeting at 5:20pm ----

15. CSEC strategy going forward (all)

- Do we need a longer-range plan?
- Doug asked whether the group likes the new format of going through liaison updates then major projects. Karen said it works but some more important topics get short-changed on time.
- Doug says we're more of a watchdog committee than an engagement committee.
- All agreed that the case studies have been a valuable project.

16. Q&A and Public Comment

- Hany asked whether Kate knew of *Trashology*, a pop-up waste-to-energy company that has taken over a warehouse at Baker Ave. Kate had not.

17. Adjourn

- Janet motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:34pm, Brad seconded. All were in favor.