



**FINAL**

## **Meeting Minutes Alternative Energy Committee**

**TIME:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 at 7:30 pm

**PLACE:** Town of Cohasset Zoom session

### **ATTENDEES:**

#### **Committee Members**

Tanya Bodell (chair)  
Michael Schmitt  
Josh Staunton  
Steve Wenner

#### **Excused Absences**

Pat Gooding

#### **Unexcused Absences**

#### **Guests**

David Langlais, NEECO Outreach Manager,  
Mass Save Partner  
John O'Rourke, Good Energy  
Daria Mark, Good Energy  
Alice Babcock, Cohasset resident

#### **Town Staff**

Michelle Leary

### **1) CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm.

### **2) MEETING MINUTES**

Steve Wenner noted a change in the January 13, 2022 minutes. Twenty towns, not 29, had their electric aggregation plans submitted by Good Energy approved by the MA DPU. Steve moved to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by M. Schmitt. The minutes were approved unanimously.

### **3) GUEST SPEAKER – John O'Rourke, Good Energy**

John O'Rourke gave a timeline for the implementation of the approved electric community choice aggregation program.

- **March:** In March, the Electric Service Agreements (ESAs) will need to be reviewed by Cohasset Town Counsel and signed by Cohasset BOS and Good Energy. At the same

time Daria Mark will prepare preliminary educational and outreach materials for Cohasset residents.

- **April/May:** Good Energy will hold a pre-bid meeting for the energy suppliers, with the bids due one week after the pre-bid meeting. The BOS will decide whether to accept one of the bids, and then must sign the ESA electronically within one hour of receiving the bids. The marketing and educational materials will be finalized, based on the option chosen. The Town does not have to select a bidder on Bid Day if the bidders do not meet the criteria established by the Select Board. If accepted, the program must then be approved by the MA DPU, which further protects the Town.
- **June/July:** Good Energy will begin a public education campaign, including sending every customer on National Grid's basic service program a letter with an opt-out card. Customers are given 30 days to respond, and those that don't want to participate are put in a standard option.
- **August:** Accounts begin to switch over to the new program when people's meters are read.

Because current energy market conditions are volatile, Good Energy recommends waiting to go out to bid to see if the market settles down. He said the sweet spot for a contract is three years, although Cohasset could choose another contract term length.

Steve asked if Good Energy had heard about the DPU's requested compliance filing. John O'Rourke said they hadn't heard yet but expected that the DPU would move this along quickly.

Daria Mark, Good Energy, said the plan would include three products:

1. **Cohasset Standard**, which includes basic renewables required by the state, plus approximately 10% Class 1 RECs, expected to be at the existing default supply rate;
2. **Cohasset Basic**, which has the minimum required renewables; and
3. **Cohasset 100% Renewables**, which includes the purchase of renewable energy credits for 100 percent of the resident's electricity load.

Daria said that everyone in Cohasset is eligible to participate, including businesses and non-profits, along with municipal operations. There are no hidden fees and participation is voluntary.



She then discussed the basic outreach and education components planned for the program and requested suggestions for other resources:

1. **Website** dedicated to Cohasset will include links to Cohasset's website. She is waiting for approval for the domain name – electricity.cohassetma.org. The website will be updated to show the progress of the program.
2. **Press releases** will be sent out 2-3 weeks before the letter is sent.
3. **Postcards** will be sent right before the notification letter.
4. **Customer notification letters** will be sent.
5. **Social media** will be used during the entire process.
6. **Community meetings** will be held on Zoom.

Mike Schmitt asked if the National Grid bill will look different. Daria said the supplier portion will reflect the changes. She also said that most people stay with the default option, but some communities have heavily marketed the 100% renewable option, which has made a big impact. Some communities send out a yearly press release stressing the amount of energy saved with the 100% option.

Steve Wenner suggested marketing also include an insert in the water bill, which has been done before and mentioned the articles in Life on the Rocks that will be forthcoming for Earth Day.

Josh Staunton emphasized the importance of social media and volunteered to think through ways to use social media to make the roll-out a success.

**ACTION ITEM:** Brianna Bennett or Michelle Leary put a link to the Good Energy website on the AEC page on the town website for the time being and move it to the homepage when the program advances.

**ACTION ITEM:** Steve Wenner and Debbie Cook in their role as the Community Aggregation Subcommittee will develop a marketing plan with Daria Mark to present to the Select Board in March.

**ACTION ITEM:** Steve Wenner will ask Good Energy for a sample contract for the Town and Town Counsel to review in advance.

**ACTION ITEM:** Josh Staunton will let Tanya know when he would like an agenda item to discuss setting up a social media plan to inform Cohasset residents about the AEC's projects.

#### **4) GUEST SPEAKER – David Langlais, Outreach Manager NEECO – Partner of Mass Save**

David Langlais gave a presentation on NEECO and Mass Save. NEECO does home energy assessments for Mass Save. In order to meet state goals of energy efficiency, 100,000 houses need to be converted yearly from gas to electric. He is expecting the state will provide better incentives and subsidies, but right now Mass Save will cover 75%-100% of the cost to insulate a home. He said heat pumps can be 400% efficient over gas and new ones will work up to -15 degrees Fahrenheit. Right now, the state will grant \$10,000 as a subsidy for residential heat pumps, but is expected to increase the amount to \$15,000 by mid-March. He said towns that have net zero energy goals are really pushing heat pumps.

He noted that if the Town creates a solarize, electric vehicle, or other type of energy program, NEECO will help promote it, both digitally and face-to-face. He can provide live or monthly reports about a program's status. Presently NEECO has been working with Westford on a heat pump program.

#### **4) EARTH DAY**

Michelle Leary and Brianna Bennett will coordinate with Pat Gooding, who is the AEC liaison with the Earth Day committee, and organize the table displays and activities.

#### **5) MAGAZINE SPREAD in Life on the Rocks**

Tanya Bodell commended the AEC for getting their articles in promptly for the April issue of Life on the Rocks. Images and data are being finalized and will be sent to Melissa Schorr for her review.

Tanya will coordinate with Melissa on a photo time and place for the committee to be featured.

**ACTION ITEM:** Michelle Leary and Brianna Bennett add and make edits to copy within a week



**ACTION ITEM:** Tanya Bodell to coordinate on the photo shoot for the Committee.

## 6) UPDATE ON INITIATIVES

- **Solar Energy RFP:** No new report.
- **Town Hall Renovation:** No new report.
- **Community Solar:** This initiative is on pause for now as other initiatives run their course.
- **Go Electric:** Debbie Cook said she is rethinking some aspects of the Go Electric program. Tanya suggested that the electrification exploration committee meet to discuss how to proceed.

**ACTION ITEM:** Debbie Cook will setup a meeting with Steve and Tanya to discuss the status of the Go Electric program.

- **Sustainability and Net Zero Goals:** Tanya said the AEC should ask the Select Board at the next quarterly meeting for permission to move forward on these goals and the GHG inventory grant from MAPC which will give us a consultant. Steve asked if the AEC should include the proposed Net Zero Building Code that the state hopes to have approved by December in the discussion. Tanya thought it would be appropriate to inform them about this and ask for guidance. She said that the presentation should also inform the Select Board about what other towns are doing, including Hingham which put out an RFP for a sustainability consultant. Hingham has voted to go to net zero by 2040 and will hire the sustainability consultant for one year for outreach and to develop a Climate Action Plan. She said the AEC should suggest to the Select Board that the Town should proceed with the consultant funded by a MAPC grant to assist with the Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

**ACTION ITEM:** Tanya to reach out to get on the Select Board agenda for the quarterly update and prepare a presentation for the quarterly meeting asking permission to move forward on the GHG inventory grant from MAPC, and sustainability and net zero exploration efforts, including the potential for hiring a sustainability consultant.



- **BRIC Grant:** Tanya said the final BRIC grant application was submitted on January 26, 2022 to MEMA, which then submitted it to FEMA. A total of six support letters were included, with Ameresco and Enel X adding to the letters of support from National Grid, GE, Siemens, and Leading Cities. Enel X said Cohasset's microgrid proposal was the most impactful and innovative microgrid project they have ever seen.

FEMA is allowing the application to be split into phases, so our application asked for \$1 million in Phase 1 to study whether the project is justified, and around \$35 million for Phase 2 to implement the project. In an update to the Select Board, Tanya said they should focus on Phase 1, which would need to include a warrant article to explore the engineering and procurement details, including potential options for tree trimming and tree wire town-wide. If awarded, 75% of the cost would be paid for by the federal government.

- 7) DATA REPORT:** There was no report on the solar array. Also, there was no report on Electric Vehicle charging.

**ACTION ITEM:** Ask Brianna to prepare a data report on electric vehicle charging for the Life on the Rocks article and Select Board quarterly meeting.

## **8) MATTERS NOT REASONABLY KNOWN IN ADVANCE**

Alicia Babcock, a Cohasset resident, asked the AEC for support in stopping the dumping of 1 million gallons of tainted water from the de-commissioning of the Pilgrim nuclear power plant into the ocean. After discussion, the committee felt that taking a position on this was out of the AEC's mission and could be perceived as advocacy. In addition, committee members did not feel comfortable taking a position personally or as a committee without further information.

## **9) NEXT MEETINGS**

Alternative Energy Committee meetings are generally held on the second Thursday of the month (unless adjusted for holidays) at 7:30 pm. The next two meetings currently are planned for:

- March 10, 2022
- April 14, 2022



**10) ADJOURNMENT**

Steve Wenner made a motion to adjourn, and Josh seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 9:51 pm.



## **SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS**

### **All Members**

- Request authorization from the Select Board to pursue information concerning Climate Action Plans and sustainability goals.
- Request the Select Board to allow the Alternative Energy Committee to move forward on using the Green House Gas grant from MAPC for a Green House Gas Inventory.
- Research grant opportunities for funding alternative energy solutions for the Town.

### **Tanya Bodell**

- Continue with outreach to Town Committees to describe the Cohasset Microgrid Project and BRIC grant application.
- Be ready to pull together presentation materials to be incorporated into the Cohasset Community Climate Summit.
- Coordinate with Select Board to schedule quarterly meeting including:
  - Update
  - Community Aggregation marketing plan
  - GHG Inventory and Sustainability Goals
  - Microgrid and FEMA BRIC grant status
  - EV charging
- Ask Select Board to appoint one new member to the AEC.
- Arrange for presentation about hydrogen at an upcoming meeting.
- Research the possibility of using hydrogen to power the proposed microgrid's rotating generator.
- Tanya and Michelle Leary to continue open communications with the Town Hall Renovation Committee regarding potential backup options and grant opportunities.

### **Debbie Cook**

- Continue to pursue monitoring effort of the Go Electric Project.
- Work with Steve Wenner on marketing plan for electrical aggregation.
- Set up meeting to discuss Go Electric plans.

### **Pat Gooding**

- Research Climate Action Plans in other communities to provide the basis for development of a Cohasset-specific Climate Action Plan and to report to the Select Board.

### **Michelle Leary / Brianna Bennett**

- Look into whether the Cohasset Climate Summit can be used as a formal outreach tool required by grants.
- Put Megan Aki's MAPC powerpoint on the AEC webpage.
- Prepare a data report on EV charging and Green Communities Grants for Life on the Rocks and the Select Board quarterly meeting.
- Put a link to Good Energy's website on AEC webpage and plan to put it on Cohasset's homepage in a prominent position as soon as the project is underway.
- Tanya and Michelle Leary to continue open communications with the Town Hall Renovation Committee regarding potential backup options and grant opportunities.
- Work with Tanya and Faisal to explore waste to heat systems to obtain sufficient background to decide whether the topic has potential opportunity in Cohasset.

### **Josh Staunton**

- Discuss social media planning for the AEC at an upcoming meeting.

### **Steve Wenner**

- Work with Good Energy to the extent any other assistance is needed to finalize the DPU approval process.
- Develop the outline of a marketing plan to ensure the details of the Community Choice Aggregation Plan and residential options are publicized.
- Work with Good Energy to obtain marketing materials to start educating the Town on the program.
- Collect and display information on Community Choice Aggregation at the Earth Day Ecofest.
- Get a sample Good Energy contract for advanced review.