



**FINAL**

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Alternative Energy Committee**

**TIME:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 7:30 pm

**PLACE:** Town of Cohasset Zoom session

#### **ATTENDEES:**

##### **Committee Members**

Adam Amann  
Tanya Bodell  
Deborah Cook  
Patricia Gooding  
Michael Schmitt  
Steve Wenner  
Tyler Thibault

##### **Excused Absences**

##### **Unexcused Absences**

##### **Town Staff**

Michelle Leary  
Brianna Bennett

##### **Guests**

Steve Girardi, Water Commission  
Lydia St. Onge, School Committee

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

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

#### **1) MEETING MINUTES**

- Pat Gooding made a motion to approve December 9, 2020 minutes, which was seconded by Steve Wenner. The minutes were approved unanimously.
- The Committee reviewed the summary of December 10, 2020 when Tanya provided an update to the Select Board on the AEC initiatives. Although an agenda was posted, a meeting was never called to order on the virtual format. The minutes, however, include the presentation and the Committee approved posting of the meeting summary for information.



## 2) UPDATE ON 2021 INITIATIVES

- **Electrify Everything (formerly known as “Solarize Plus”)**

Debbie Cook reported that she is in the process of forming a steering committee of three members each from Cohasset, Marshfield and Scituate and scheduling a kickoff meeting. The project aims to educate and incentivize people in all three towns to replace fossil-fuel powered appliances and HVAC equipment with efficient electric equipment (e.g., heat pumps).

- **Green Communities**

Michelle Leary said the Town closed out this phase of the Green Communities project, even though there is a two-year extension. The new plan will involve a complete recommissioning of the schools HVAC systems during 2021 to ensure that they are not competing with each other and are being optimized for efficiency.

On Tuesday, January 19, she will be meeting with a lighting expert to look at converting the schools to LED lighting. The cost would be covered by National Grid. Based on Steve’s suggestion, she will ask if the lights can have controllers.

- **Earth Day 2021**

Adam reported that he has talked to the Earth Day Committee and they are figuring out whether the project is doable in light of COVID restrictions. Adam suggested that the derby course be in front of Anchor and Sail on Main Street. He needs to develop guidelines and standards for the vehicles and find out whether the street can be blocked off. The event would be April 24, with a rain date of April 25. The Committee offered suggestions on how the alternative energy derby could be implemented.

- **Community Aggregation**

Stever Wenner indicated that progress is being made at the DPU and the backlog of towns awaiting approval from the state is beginning to break up. Three towns that had submitted applications in July 2017 were approved.

- **Community Solar**

Steve contacted Energy Sage and the Clean Energy Center and discovered they had little information on community solar. He did find two towns that had community solar programs: Newton and Sturbridge which allocate solar energy produced on Town sites between municipal load and low-income families. The Sturbridge system was designed by Ameresco and Steve suggested that they be contacted for more information.

- **Town Hall**

Michelle said that the town hall building estimate had been received by the Town Manager and includes cost estimates for every energy project that the AEC has inquired about, including geothermal and solar. Pat Gooding agreed to represent the AEC on the Town Hall Building Committee.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

Debbie to continue to get the Electrify program underway and will report the progress at the next meeting. She will check with the Town Manager about the best way to position the committee to be able to get some type of town endorsements.

Michelle will work with the schools to develop a proposal for LED lighting with controllers at the school.

Adam will write a business plan for the 'alternative soap box derby', which will include rules and regulations for the vehicles, COVID measures and finding out if Main Street can be closed during the event.

Steve will continue to monitor the status of DPU approval of Cohasset's electrical aggregation approval.

Steve will check with Ameresco to get more information about Sturbridge's community solar project.

Pat will be the official liaison to the Town Hall Committee and will attend the town hall building meeting on February 2.

### **3) 2021 TOWN MEETING**

Town Meeting is scheduled for May 24, 2021. Michelle has put a placeholder in the warrant for an article from the AEC. After discussion, the AEC determined that we should ask for an addition to the Town budget of \$5,000 for marketing and communications of the Community Aggregation program and other AEC initiatives. Tanya also proposed asking for funds to hire a consultant for electric municipalization and Michelle indicated that she already had requested \$10,000 to examine a Town municipalization option.

<p><b>ACTION ITEM:</b> Michelle to confirm the \$10,000 study money request to hire a consultant for the electrical municipalization effort and include an additional \$5,000 for marketing.</p>
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### **4) MICROGRID UPDATE AND GRANTS**

- **Mass CEC Study Grants-** Brianna set up a meeting on January 20, 2021 with the MassCEC to discuss what is available.
- **Microgrid Mondays** – Brianna and Michelle have set up six virtual tours of microgrids ranging from a residential nanogrid to a large-scale microgrid innovation center, beginning February 1 and running six consecutive weeks from noon to 1:00 pm. Registration is open to the public and sign-ups can be done on the AEC webpage. The first press release was scheduled to go out today.

### **5) ELECTRIC MUNICIPALIZATION**

Tanya indicated that the Select Board asked the AEC to look into the feasibility of the town creating its own municipal electric company. Steve Girardi said that a small town like Cohasset would be a good candidate. Rates could be lower and reliability greater, but the town would have to build a substation and purchase the distribution wires from National Grid at their full replacement cost (and then have to invest to upgrade them).

A discussion ensued of the pros and cons. Tanya said that although the Town's current solar bids could cover 30% of the residential energy needs, battery storage would be required. In addition, owning the distribution system wires would not solve the upstream reliability problems.

Pat Gooding made a motion to put Electrical Municipalization into the AEC's portfolio of projects. Mike Schmitt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Tanya said that the microgrid subcommittee would be charged with investigating Electrical Municipalization.

**ACTION ITEM:** Microgrid Subcommittee to oversee research and work with a potential consultant to examine the possibility of Electrical Municipalization.

## **6) DATA INITIATIVES**

The following is Briana's report to the AEC regarding the recent use of the electric charging stations:

- The town has 20 ports at multiple locations. 16 are recognized on Charge Point, but 14 are listed as functioning.
- 12 ports are being used less than 3 hours a week, 1 is being used 3-6 hours a week, 1 is being used more than 6 hours a week, and two of the ports are unlisted (labeled as disabled).
- The Town saw a steady increase in the number of drivers using the stations from October (3) to November (13) to December (18). Eight (8) drivers have already used the stations in January 2021.
- In the last 30 days, the Town EV charging stations has dispensed 366 kWh of electricity. In total, the Town EV charging stations have dispensed 1,052.57 kWh since October.
- If the Town pays \$0.12 per kWh for electricity, then based on the last 30 days, the monthly cost to the Town is \$43. Based on MEI, the FY2021 total cost divided by total usage is \$0.18 per kWh. At that rate, the cost to the town is \$65 a month.  
NOTE: Setting the price for charging higher than gasoline will disincentivize further EV purchases. If they are consuming 15 kW for a full charge, then charging \$0.12 per kWh would be about \$2.
- To date, the charging stations and electric vehicles operated by the Town has avoided 4,033 kg of greenhouse gas emissions. This is equivalent to planting 103 trees and letting them grow for 10 years.

Brianna said there still is no data yet regarding the number of privately-owned electric vehicles in Cohasset, but the MA RMV will be creating an EV hub which hopefully will be collecting this information.

## **7) SOLAR ENERGY RFP**

Michelle said that RFP Evaluation Committee chose three developers to pursue different projects and a Letter of Intent has been issued or is being finalized in order to put the projects in the queue:



- 1) Ameresco for the School Carports;
- 2) Palmer Capital for the DPW Station and third party stations; and
- 3) Solect Energy for school roofs, Water Plant and other opportunistic sites owned by the Town.

These developers have been asked for additional detail surrounding their proposed sites and additional design ideas.

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

- Steve announced he will be a presenter at a climate symposium sponsored by the Hingham League of Women Voters on January 27
- Michelle said that Beverly, MA has instituted a successful electric bus program utilizing the Highland Electric Company. She will pursue more information.

**9) NEXT MEETINGS**

The Committee will continue to meet on the second Thursdays of the month at 7:30 pm:

- February 11, 2021
- March 11, 2021

**10) ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

The meeting ended at 9:00 pm.

## **SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS**

### **Adam Amann**

- Develop a business plan for a 'soapbox derby' type event in conjunction with Earth Day.

### **Tanya Bodell**

- Send final approved minutes for posting from 12/9 and 12/10.

### **Debbie Cook**

- Provide January meeting minutes for review and vote at the next meeting
- Report status of the organizing effort of the tri-town committee for the Electrify Everything program

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

- Confirm the \$10,000 study money request to hire a consultant for the electrical municipalization effort and include an additional \$5,000 for marketing
- Promote Microgrid Mondays

From prior meetings:

- Consider microgrid proposal for FEMA in October 2021
- Propose to work with schools on LED light conversion project for the Green Communities program by February
- Continue to pursue Electric Vehicle count
- Continue to explore ways to obtain an inventory of home generators installed in Cohasset homes
- Inform Cohasset residents about charging stations via the Mariner and social media

### **Microgrid Subcommittee**

- Microgrid Subcommittee to oversee research and work with a potential consultant to examine the possibility of Electrical Municipalization



**Pat Gooding**

- Represent the AEC at Town Hall Building Committee meeting on February 2

**Steve Wenner**

- Find out more from Ameresco about Sturbridge's community solar program
- Continue tracking the status of the community aggregation program