



**Town of
Cohasset
Massachusetts**

FINAL

Meeting Minutes

Alternative Energy Committee

TIME: Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 7:30 pm

PLACE: Town of Cohasset Zoom session

ATTENDEES:

Committee Members

Adam Amann
Tanya Bodell
Deborah Cook
Patricia Gooding
Steve Wenner

Excused Absences

Michael Schmitt
Tyler Thibault

Guests

Steve Girardi, Water Commission
Lydia St. Onge, School Committee
Sam Wakeman, Capital Budget
Corey Evans, Select Board

Unexcused Absences

Town Staff

Michelle Leary
Brianna Bennett

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 Adam Amann. The minutes were approved unanimously.

2) ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUSES:

Mark Riccio, vice-president of sales, Highland Electric Transportation gave a Powerpoint presentation on the benefits of converting to electric buses and a pilot project in Beverly. He said that electric buses have one percent of the moving parts of diesel buses, substantially simplifying maintenance and lowering maintenance costs. In addition, polluting diesel energy is replaced by much cheaper, non-polluting renewable energy; bus batteries can provide vehicle-

to-grid power transmission; incentives and increasingly lower battery pricing increase affordability.

His company provides a 100% turnkey system. They will design and build the electric charging infrastructure and procure the buses, for basically the same rate Cohasset pays now. They own the entire system and are responsible for all maintenance and upgrades, recognizing that the technology will likely need to be upgraded within the next ten years. If the town decides to scale up the project, Highland will put in all the infrastructure needed for 100% capacity at the beginning. They also offer financing.

ACTION ITEMS: Action items focus on understanding the current bus situation:

Lydia will ask Sue Owens at the Cohasset School Department for the current cost of the school bus program.

Michelle will invite representatives from Beverly to the next AEC meeting to discuss their pilot project.

Steve Girardi will contact National Grid to discuss potential locations where charging stations for the buses could be located.

Adam will research the option of hydrogen buses.

3) ELECTRIFY EVERYTHING

Debbie reported that the exploratory team had its first organizational meeting on January 18, 2021. They intend to meet every two weeks with other towns initially and Debbie will keep the AEC updated on their progress.

4) RENEWABLE ENERGY PROCUREMENT

Michelle said that Cohasset was waiting for a template and that we are in the SMART 2.0 queue with Ameresco.

5) MICROGRID UPDATE – MICROGRID MONDAYS

Brianna reported that six Monday sessions have been set up from noon – 1 pm for February through Mid-March. The first one featured Russ Electric's system. The sessions are being recorded and will be posted on the AEC webpage. Industry partners (non-profits) are going to help with publicity. Talking points are being drafted for the Mariner and other press.

6) ELECTRIC MUNICIPALIZATION

Tanya said the AEC submitted a budget request in the Town Budget to fund a consultant to assist with examining how and whether to convert Cohasset to a municipal electrical company. The budget will be circulated through the Town process and submitted for approval at the Town meeting in June.

7) SUSTAINABILITY REQUIREMENTS AND STATUS

Pat presented a power point explaining what sustainability is and how social, economic and environmental issues intersect and need to be addressed. Further discussion regarding the role of the AEC will occur at the next meeting.

ACTION ITEM:

Tanya to allocate time at our next meeting for discussion of sustainability and whether the AEC should consider expanding its mandate into broader sustainability issues.

8) UPDATE ON 2021 INITIATIVES

- **Earth Day 2021:** The Earth Day Committee had a meeting on January 16, 2021 and did not include the soap box derby in the application to the Select Board for approval.

ACTION ITEM: Michelle will ask Peter to include the concept of a derby in his proposal or the Select Board if we can do this on our own to celebrate Earth Day.

- **Community Aggregation:** Steve Wenner reported that Good Energy was going to have a meeting with the MA DPU on Thursday, February 18, 2021. Michelle will attend.

ACTION ITEM: Michelle to attend MA DPU meeting on the Community Aggregation Plan.

- **Community Solar:** Steve contacted the town manager in Newton and discovered that the town's community solar was very different than what we are envisioning for Cohasset, making it less relevant as a case study. Steve suggested that we try to tap into the bidders for solar installations in Cohasset to understand how they might be able to assist with community solar.

ACTION ITEM: Michelle and Tanya to discuss our project vision of community solar with Ameresco.

- **Town Hall:** Michelle noted that all the cost estimates for Town Hall are in and under review. The estimates were very expensive, but the most costly energy-related option to use geothermal energy has not been abandoned yet. There will be a meeting on Tuesday, February 16, 2021 to further discuss the energy options for a new Town Hall.
- **Data Initiatives:** Michelle is looking into the possibility of getting grants and funding for fast chargers, which can cost \$50,000. She is also continuing work on getting LED lights installed in the schools, which are 95% funded by National Grid.

ACTION ITEM: Michelle to pursue grant funding for fast chargers and LED lights for the schools.

9) MATTERS NOT REASONABLY KNOWN IN ADVANCE

None.

7) NEXT MEETINGS

Second Thursdays of the month at 7:30 pm:

- March 11, 2021
- April 8, 2021

8) ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting ended at 9:00 pm.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

Adam Amann

- Research opportunities for hydrogen-powered buses.
- Continue pursuing the concept of a derby project for Earth Day.

Tanya Bodell

- Discuss vision for a community solar program with solar energy array bidders and whether it could be incorporated in our solar array project.

Debbie Cook

- Provide January meeting minutes for next meeting.
- Continue to pursue organizing effort of the tri-town committee for the Electrify Everything program.

Pat Gooding

- Lead a discussion about sustainability at the next AEC meeting.

Michelle Leary / Brianna Bennett

- Promote and implement Microgrid Mondays.

From prior meetings:

- Consider microgrid proposal for FEMA in October 2021.
- Propose new project ideas 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.
- Continue work on LED lighting in schools.

Steve Wenner

- Continue checking on Cohasset's progress with community aggregation approval.



Steve Girardi

- Contact National Grid to discuss locations where potential charging stations for electric buses could be located.

Lydia St. Onge

- Ask Sue Owens in the Cohasset School Department about the cost of our current bus program.