



FINAL

Meeting Minutes

Alternative Energy Committee

TIME: Thursday, March 18, 2021 at 7:30 pm

PLACE: Town of Cohasset Zoom session

ATTENDEES:

Committee Members

Chair: Tanya Bodell

Members:

Adam Amann

Deborah Cook

Patricia Gooding

Tyler Thibault

Steve Wenner

Excused Absences

Michael Schmitt

Unexcused Absences

Town Staff

Michelle Leary

Brianna Bennett

Guests

Lydia St. Onge, Cohasset

School Committee

Josiah Stevenson &

Phil Lehr, Chairman – Cohasset

Town Hall Committee

CALL TO ORDER

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

1) MEETING MINUTES

- Pat Gooding made a motion to approve February 11, 2021 minutes, which was seconded by Adam Amann. The minutes were approved unanimously.

2) TOWN HALL COMMITTEE UPDATE:

Josiah Stevenson, member of the Cohasset Town Hall building committee provided an update to the Alternative Energy Committee on the Town Hall plants. He presented to the AEC a schematic of the proposed new town hall's layout. He felt the price for construction was reasonable, which

included generous insulation. Plans for the HVAC systems were still in flux, including an all-electric option and geothermal.

Tanya suggested that the Town Hall Building Committee consider getting a price for a basic gas system versus alternative energy options, and then the AEC and Town could look for grants to upgrade to geothermal and/or other energy efficient systems.

Adam Amann suggested that the goal should be to build a net-zero building, which may require purchasing renewable energy credits. Josiah agreed as he didn't believe rooftop solar would be effective, because Town Hall roof has too many angles. Adam suggested that a battery storage facility should be considered. A discussion ensued over possible sites, including the little shed behind town hall, which Michelle said was being used for storage.

Michelle Leary said that the town just signed an MOU with National Grid for the utility to pay for the incremental costs to upgrade insulation in town buildings.

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| <p>ACTION ITEM: AEC and town should monitor the town hall planning and be prepared to look for grants, if necessary, to upgrade HVAC systems to a greater efficiency</p> |
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3) GO ELECTRIC PROJECT:

Debbie Cook reported back the results of the exploration team's effort regarding a Solarize Plus-type of program that would educate and incentivize residents of Cohasset. There is interest by residents of Scituate and Marshfield to work with Cohasset to help to convert residential and business buildings from fossil fuels to alternative energy.

Marshfield has permission to move forward, and Scituate is looking into extending their electrical aggregation committee's mission to allow this effort.

Tanya indicated that the next step would be to ask the Select Board to approve further development of this type of initiative with the AEC formally forming a subcommittee for developing the details of a Go Electric Project.

MOTION: Pat Gooding made a motion to give the Alternative Energy Committee permission to go to the Select Board and ask for approval to continue to invest resources in developing this type of initiative. Tanya seconded the motion and following discussion, it passed unanimously.

4) SOLAR ENERGY RFP UPDATE

Michelle indicated that the Select Board wanted to pursue putting solar on the school roofs, but a roof replacement schedule would not be known until at least June. Lydia St. Onge said the state is trying to expedite and fund roof replacements, but the School Committee has been very focused on getting the schools ready for students to return full time. Ameresco and Solect will need to present their proposals to the School Committee as soon as we can put them on the agenda. Ameresco already has a presentation prepared.

Michelle indicated that a draft warrant article to approve solar development at the Water Plant was in the works. Solect will need to supply detailed plans for their solar proposals at the water department and town parking lot.

ACTION ITEM:

Michelle and Brianna to coordinate with Ameresco and Solect to present detailed plans of their proposals to the School Committee. Lydia to coordinate getting the solar developers on the School Committee agenda.

5) MICROGRID UPDATE

Microgrid Mondays: This initiative has been a huge success. Tanya thanked Brianna for her hard work in making them happen.

MassCEC Grant: Briana reported that the preliminary cost/benefit analysis showed that the most cost-effective approach for a microgrid is a fossil-fuel generator coupled with solar arrays. Batteries are much more costly, but the MassCEC is pushing for a battery solution as part of the study.

Tanya noted that once the study was completed, and included the incremental cost of batteries, the AEC could look into grant funding for the incremental cost of going green.

6) Sustainability Initiative Update

Pat requested that discussion be postponed.

7) Electrical Municipalization

Michelle confirmed that the AEC had asked for funding for a consultant as part of the budget being proposed on the town warrant.

8) Update on 2021 Initiatives:

- **Community Aggregation**

Steve Wenner reported that he met with Chris Senior to discuss what the town could do to get the state DPU to approve the Cohasset Municipal Community Aggregation Plan. The DPU approval has been on hold. Chris suggested sending a letter to our legislators asking what the hold-up is. Steve has drafted a tentative letter. Michelle expressed concern that John O'Rourke of Good Energy discouraged sending a letter to the politicians.

ACTION ITEM: Steve to check in with John O'Rourke regarding what efforts the Town can do to facilitate approval by the DPU. If John agrees that a letter would be useful, Steve, Michelle and Tanya to wordsmith Steve's draft letter.

- **Community Solar**

Steve spoke with Ameresco who indicated that they don't see any problem integrating community solar into their contracts and liked the idea. Ameresco would require the Town to take at least 50 percent of the energy. Steve said community solar incentives were declining but were available for low-income people, who did not have to reside in Cohasset for eligibility.

- **Data Initiatives**

Nothing to report.

- **Grants**

Michelle reported that Cohasset received all eligible funding for Green Communities from last year. She will be applying for a new grant in September. All projects will receive 100% funding with no matches required, so she wants to make sure Cohasset's proposals are a slam-dunk. She is thinking of requesting funding for EMS controls in all the schools and is waiting for the cost/benefit analysis.

ACTION ITEM: Michelle to pursue Green Communities grant.

- **Presentations**

Tanya inquired as to whether the AEC would like to have outside industry representatives present at future meetings, and how frequently. She said many

companies have been contacting her particularly after the successful Microgrid Mondays programs. Committee members indicated that they would like presentations from vendors and companies at each meeting if the topic was relevant and worthwhile.

- **Earth Day**

Adam said plans for the derby were going to be postponed until next year, because there wasn't enough time to pull the logistics together. However, he suggested setting up an information table at Cohasset's Clean Up Day or doing something else that was more manageable.

Steve suggested that the AEC could sponsor environmental movies on 143TV, and said that Don Roines, station manager, gave approval if we decide to do it.

ACTION ITEM: Adam to coordinate with Michelle and Brianna regarding a potential Earth Day event.

9) MATTERS NOT REASONABLY KNOWN IN ADVANCE

AEC members congratulated Briana for organizing the very popular, well-run and well-received Microgrid Mondays program.

NEXT MEETINGS

Second Thursdays of the month at 7:30 pm:

- April 8, 2021
- May 13, 2021

8) ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting ended at 9:37 pm.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

All Members

Adam Amann

- Research opportunities for hydrogen-powered buses
- Explore having an information table at the Earth Day Cleanup
- Coordinate with Michelle and Brianna regarding a potential Earth Day event

Tanya Bodell

- If needed, finalize letter to legislators with Steve and Michelle requesting an update of the status of our community electrical aggregation program
- Request support from the Select Board for the exploratory effort for Solarize Plus to convert into development of the "Go Electric Project" as a subcommittee of the AEC
- Arrange for presentation about hydrogen at the next meeting

Debbie Cook

- Provide March meeting minutes for next meeting
- Continue to explore development of a "Go Electric Project"

Pat Gooding

- Lead a discussion about sustainability at an upcoming AEC meeting

Michelle Leary / Brianna Bennett

- Coordinate with Ameresco and Solect to present detailed plans of their proposals to the School Committee
- If needed, work with Steve and Tanya on letter to legislators
- Monitor town hall planning on HVAC systems and look for grants for upgrades to most efficient



From prior meetings:

- Pursue a microgrid proposal for FEMA in October 2021
- Propose new project ideas for the Green Communities grant program
- Collect information on Electric Vehicles in Town
- Obtain an inventory of home generators installed in Cohasset homes
- Inform Cohasset residents about charging stations via the Mariner and social media.
- Continue working on LED lighting in schools

Steve Wenner

- Check in with John O'Rourke regarding what efforts the Town can do to facilitate approval by the DPU
- If John agrees, finalize letter to the legislators
- Research movie ideas for Cohasset 143TV for Earth Day

Lydia St. Onge

- Coordinate getting the solar developers on the School Committee agenda
- Ask Sue Owens in the Cohasset School Department about the cost of our current bus program