



**FINAL**

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Alternative Energy Committee**

**TIME:** Thursday, May 13, 2021 at 7:30 pm

**PLACE:** Town of Cohasset Zoom session

#### **ATTENDEES:**

##### **Committee Members**

Tanya Bodell (chair)  
Adam Amann  
Deborah Cook  
Patricia Gooding  
Michael Schmitt  
Steve Wenner

##### **Excused Absences**

Tyler Thibault

##### **Unexcused Absences**

##### **Town Staff**

Brianna Bennett  
Michelle Leary

##### **Guests**

Jason Federico, Cohasset DPW  
Jackson Doughty, Ameresco  
Steve Girardi, Cohasset Water  
Commissioner

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

The meeting was called to order at 8:05pm. (due to a delay in accessing zoom link) Pat Gooding presided over the meeting and Tanya attended by phone.

#### **2) MEETING MINUTES**

Mike Schmitt made a motion to approve the April 8, 2021 minutes, which was seconded by Steve Wenner. The minutes were approved unanimously.

#### **3) PRESENTATION BY AMERESCO – Solar Canopies at schools**

Jackson Doughty, a solar project developer at Ameresco, gave an update on the solar energy array carports at the schools. Jackson said that Ameresco representatives have met twice with the Cohasset School Committee to request approval to proceed with a power purchase agreement and lease, which has not yet been granted. Ameresco has analyzed various solar options, including:

- **Rooftop solar** – This is a very expensive option because the roofs still have a ten-year life, so there is a long timeline and it would be expensive to move the solar panels when a roof is to be replaced.
- **Canopies on a bus parking lot** – Plans to construct a bus parking lot have not been made so this is not viable.
- **Ground-mount array** – Potential sites all had constraints, including massive tree removal, wetlands and shadows.

His conclusion is that solar carports continue to be the recommended alternative right now, estimating that they could save the town more than \$50,000 in a year, and over \$1 million over 20 years. The carports could include electric vehicle charging readiness and actual charging stations. The carports could supply a large portion of the school's electrical needs:

- Deer Hill: 98%
- Osgood: 115%
- High School/Middle School: 33%

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

Pat Gooding reported on the AEC presence at Earth Day.

- **Earth Day Information Table:** The AEC information table at town hall for Clean Up Day on Saturday, April 24, was well received, and a steady stream of people stopped and picked up materials created by Brianna.
- **Electric Vehicle Charging Stations Celebration:** On Sunday, April 25, AEC members, members of the select board, Town Manager Chris Senior, and five electric vehicles and their owners visited each of Cohasset's charging stations site for a live-streamed dedication ceremony:

[Cohasset EV Ceromony - YouTube](#)

[EV Ceremony Slideshow.mov - Google Drive](#)

#### 5) **TOWN WARRANT – WATER PLANT SITE**

The Town Warrant includes an article requesting permission from the Town to lease land at the Water Plant for solar energy arrays. Solect had identified a potential roof-top solar opportunity

and looked at the surrounding area to determine if the Town could put ground-mount solar near the water plant.

Jason Federico from the Water Commission was in attendance and indicated that he thought the article was moot because the consultant was not interested in pursuing a ground mount array and the Water Department building might be expanded, limiting work on a rooftop solar project.

Tanya noted that the article was in the warrant and would have to be postponed indefinitely. She offered to speak with Chris Senior about what to do with the article.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

Tanya, Jason and Steve Girardi will meet with Chris Senior to recommend indefinite postponement of the article.

**6) ELECTRIC BUSES:**

Pat Gooding noted that a speaker will be coming to the AEC's July meeting from Concord to discuss their experience with electric buses.

Tanya made a motion that the AEC set up an Electric Bus Subcommittee, seconded by Steve, which passed unanimously.

**ACTION ITEM:**

The AEC will form an Electric Bus Subcommittee to study the feasibility of electric buses for Cohasset.

**7) UPDATES ON 2020 INITIATIVES**

- **Solar Energy RFP** – Three vendors are looking into third party sites and rooftop solar. Solect has withdrawn from the Water Department solar array due to difficulties in placing a ground mount system and the sensitive ecological and recreational aspects of the site. Ameresco has been meeting with the schools on carports.
- **Microgrid** – The report from GE funded by the MassCEC grant is due in one to two months.

- **Community Aggregation** – Steve attended a meeting with the DOER regarding Community Aggregation. When he asked about the delay in multiple town plans, including Cohasset, the DOER had no answer. Many other communities are awaiting approvals.
- **Data Initiatives** -Brianna reported on the electric vehicle charging station vehicles:
  - Charging Station usage peaked in March with 124 sessions and 29 unique drivers. In April there were 121 sessions and 30 unique drivers. In May so far there has been 44 sessions and 20 unique drivers.
  - In the last 30 days, the Town of Cohasset has dispensed 977 kWh of electricity. At \$0.12/kWh that is approximately \$117.00.
  - To date, the charging stations have avoided 6,998 kg of greenhouse gas emissions. That is equivalent to planting 179 trees and letting them grow for 10 years.

## 8) **UPDATES ON 2021 INITIATIVES**

- **Community Solar** – Steve reported that Ameresco has engaged in community solar and the general business model is to have the Town purchase half of the energy as an “anchor client” and residents, businesses and low income housing purchase the other half. This is a way the Town can leverage its purchasing power.
- **Grants** – Nothing to report at this time, but the AEC will need to prepare for the upcoming BRIC grants for energy resiliency and reliability.
- **Sustainability Initiative** - Pat requested that the AEC defer discussion. She has reached out to the Concord, MA sustainability director and the town of Natick and will have more information soon.
- **Town Hall renovations** – Additional funding for Town Hall design is being requested at the upcoming Town Meeting.
- **Electric Municipalization** – Tanya said that the town warrant contains monies for a study in the budget. Once the budget is passed, the AEC may want to establish a committee to issue an RFP for a consultant to examine the options for electric municipalization.
- **Go Electric** – Debbie Cook said the Go Electric steering committee has been meeting frequently to work on the website and to make progress on the project.

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

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** Tanya said that Debbie had talked with a MA state ethics attorney to clarify what constitutes a conflict of interest, particularly regarding the AEC's relationship with the Go Electric Project. The attorney said that members of a town board or committee can engage in projects in the same area in a personal capacity, including writing articles using their name, but they cannot make mention of the board or committee they serve on. When they report to the board or committee about their projects' activities, they do so as a citizen.

**CLIMATE ROADMAP LEGISLATION** – Steve said that State Rep. Joan Meschino would like to come to the next AEC meeting to talk about the new climate legislation. He also said that 360MA is asking towns to push for more funding for MA Save and the state Solarize program.

**10) NEXT MEETINGS**

Second Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm:

- June 10, 2021
- July 8, 2021

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting ended at 9:34pm.

## **SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS**

### **All Members**

- Choose members to serve on Electric Bus committee.

### **Adam Amann**

- Research opportunities for hydrogen-powered buses.

### **Tanya Bodell**

- Wordsmith letter to legislators with Steve and Michelle requesting an update of the status of our community electrical aggregation program.
- Arrange for presentation about hydrogen at an upcoming meeting.
- Continue discussions about expanding AEC's mission.
- Develop a grant proposal for FEMA.

### **Debbie Cook**

- Provide May meeting minutes for next meeting.
- Continue to report on organizing effort of the tri-town committee for the Go Electric Project.

### **Pat Gooding**

- Research sustainability programs in Concord, MA, Sharon and other towns.
- Find a speaker on sustainability for a future AEC meeting.

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

- Work with Steve and Tanya on letter to legislators regarding Community Choice Aggregation.
- Monitor town hall planning on HVAC systems and look for grants for upgrades to most efficient systems.
- Request detailed plans from Ameresco and Solect for designated sites.



**From prior meetings:**

- Consider microgrid proposal for FEMA in October 2021.
- Continue to pursue Electric Vehicle count.
- Continue to explore ways to obtain an inventory of home generators installed in Cohasset homes.
- Continue work on LED lighting in schools.

**Steve Wenner**

- Wordsmith letter to the legislators in case it is needed.

**Lydia St. Onge**

- Ask Sue Owens in the Cohasset School Department about the cost of our current bus program.
- Obtain status of inquiry to state regarding hastening roof replacement for purposes of installing solar panels.