



FINAL

Meeting Minutes

Alternative Energy Committee

TIME: Thursday, August 12, 2021 at 7:30 pm

PLACE: Town of Cohasset Zoom session

ATTENDEES:

Committee Members

Tanya Bodell (chair)
Deborah Cook
Pat Gooding
Michael Schmitt

Excused Absences

Tyler Thibault
Adam Amann
Steve Wenner

Guests

Corey Evans, Select Board
Laura Burns, Hingham Water Commission
Brian Foulds, Distributed Resource Catalyst,
Town of Concord
Steve Girardi, Cohasset Water Commission

Unexcused Absences

Town Staff

Brianna Bennett

1) CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:32pm.

2) MEETING MINUTES

Pat Gooding made a motion to approve the July 8, 2021 minutes, which was seconded by Mike Schmitt. The minutes were approved unanimously.

NOTE: A quorum was not achieved until after the minutes were approved. They will be voted on at the next meeting for completeness.



3) PRESENTATION ON CONCORD'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN AND NET ZERO GOAL: BRIAN FOULDS, TOWN OF CONCORD

Brian Foulds gave a Powerpoint presentation explained the genesis of Concord's Sustainability program, which began in 2007 when a group of citizens formed the *Comprehensive Sustainable Energy Planning Committee*.

Over the years, the sustainability effort concentrated on specific initiatives, initially dealing with the 'low hanging fruit' - educating people about EV's and solar power, becoming a Green Community, instituting plastic bag bans, etc. In 2016 Concord formed the Energy Futures Task Force to organize the various ongoing and proposed sustainability efforts by hiring a Director of Sustainability and creating an Operational Plan to meet the Town's goals to lower the Town's carbon footprint by 80% by 2050.

Brian said that a great deal of work went into preparing the warrant articles to hire the Sustainability Director and develop an operational plan, including writing an 86-page report. The effort paid off when over 850 residents voted in support and only three voted against the sustainability articles.

Today Concord has two sustainability committees, one to do outreach and activism, which includes Concord's electrify everything project, and another which deals with policy.

4) CLIMATE ACTION PLAN AND NET ZERO TARGETS

Pat Gooding said she spoke with Select Board member Diane Kennedy about whether Cohasset could set up a Climate Action Committee. Diane suggested that she talk to other boards and see whether this makes sense to fit into Cohasset's master planning effort. Pat noted that the process is more complicated than she initially thought. Corey Evans said that perhaps the AEC would be the logical board to spearhead these efforts.

<p>ACTION ITEM: Pat Gooding to meet with Katie Dugan, chair of the Master Planning Committee to discuss setting up a Climate Action Plan and how it might fit in the Master Plan.</p>
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5) GRANTS

- **FEMA BRIC grant** – Brianna reported that the BRIC grant program is focused on improving emergency response and mitigating the impacts of hazards and adverse events. The program prioritizes disadvantaged communities to help them deal with mitigation. The grant can be used for microgrids per the website, but effort would be required to

understand what type of microgrid proposal Cohasset would pursue, especially because the initiative depends on National Grid.

A meeting is scheduled with National Grid on August 30th to understand what they might be interested in pursuing. The application process begins September 30 and closes January 28, but all applications must go through the state MEMA process first and state deadlines are sooner. Much needs to be accomplished, including a statement of interest and environmental assessment.

Tanya suggested that Cohasset could pitch itself as a demonstration project for community-wide microgrids as we need less than 20 MW to service the entire community. However, there are four phases to the Microgrid Conceptual Framework approved by the Alternative Energy Committee last year and any one of those phases could be a stand-alone proposal. She said that she is not aware of any other community that has done a community-wide microgrid, and the time is ripe with the national attention being placed on improving infrastructure. She plans to discuss the BRIC grant with the Select Board on August 24th.

ACTION ITEM: Subject to the Select Board approving pursuit of a microgrid grant, set up a committee to work on the BRIC grant sized according to National Grid's agreed-upon level of participation.

- **Mass CEC Study Grant** – Brianna said the CEC had a representative for the Elm Street project, but she is waiting for a second rep to be assigned for the DPU project, with just one week left before the deadline.
- **Green Communities** – Brianna announced that MAPC had given Cohasset a grant of \$3,000 under the Green Communities program.

6) UPDATES ON 2020 INITIATIVES

Solar Energy RFP – Tanya said all solar energy arrays are on hold pending National Grid's estimated interconnection cost of around \$500,000 for installation of a 500 kW system on the school roofs. This charge is for common costs at the Norwell substation. Such costs would apply to any new solar project of similar size, making them uneconomic to pursue. The Town is corresponding with National Grid to understand the basis for this cost and whether it can be mitigated. She suggested trying to roll this cost into the BRIC grant if negotiations with National Grid don't work out.



7) Community Aggregation

The Select Board took a vote to clarify their support on community aggregation. Good Energy had asked for an official vote count based on a request by the MA DPU.

8) UPDATE ON 2021 INITIATIVES

- **Community Solar** – On hold.
- **Electric Buses** – Tanya will ask the Select Board on August 24 to study the feasibility of electric buses as part of the microgrid study. She said that funding could perhaps be included in the BRIC grant application.
- **Electric Municipalization** – The AEC will need approval from the Select Board before moving forward. Tanya suggested electrical municipalization might also be included in the BRIC grant. Mike Schmitt said that Stow was doing something similar and could be a good example.
- **Town Hall Renovation** – Nothing to report.
- **Go Electric Project** – Debbie Cook stated that the Go Electric steering committee was continuing work on the second phase of the project - preparing to approach vendors. The committee has created a vendor section on the website and an online questionnaire for vendors to contact the Go Electric Project with their offers and discounts. Pat had an initial meeting with Hingham Lumber to get their feedback.

9) DATA REPORT

Thanks to efforts by Corey Evans and Brianna, a list of residential backup generators in Cohasset has been generated back to 2013.

10) MATTERS NOT REASONABLY KNOWN IN ADVANCE

Mike said he filed a complaint with the DPU about Cohasset's recent power outage and learned that Cohasset is on the fifth worst circuit in MA. If it drops to the lowest 5% in Massachusetts again this year, National Grid will be assessed a financial penalty by the DPU.

Tanya announced that the AEC has two positions to fill.



ACTION ITEM: Find two new candidates for the AEC

11) NEXT MEETINGS

Second Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm:

- September 9, 2021
- October 14, 2021

12) ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting ended at 9:34 pm.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

All Members

- Set up a team to work on the FEMA BRIC grant if the Select Board gives approval to proceed.
- Monitor charging stations data.
- Research grant opportunities for funding alternative energy solutions for the Town Hall renovation, including geothermal.

Tanya Bodell

- Ask Select Board for permission to develop a grant proposal for FEMA.
- Ask Select Board to appoint two new members of the AEC.
- Arrange for presentation about hydrogen at an upcoming meeting.
- Continue discussions with National Grid about the interconnection charges for solar.

Debbie Cook

- Provide meeting minutes for next meeting.
- Continue to pursue monitoring effort of the tri-town committee for the Go Electric Project.

Pat Gooding

- Continue to research sustainability programs in Concord, MA, Sharon and other towns.
- Approach the Master Plan committee regarding implementation of sustainable goals into the Town's Master Plan.

Michelle Leary / Brianna Bennett

- Keep tracking electric vehicle charging usage.
- Determine whether to add school roof replacements and a geothermal energy system to the FEMA BRIC application.

Steve Wenner

- Continue to monitor Community Aggregation Plan status.