

## COMPREHENSIVE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes, corrected as per meeting of March 8, 2016  
January 12, 2016

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Comprehensive Sustainable Energy Committee was held on Tuesday, January 12, 2016, at 7:30 pm at the Harvey Wheeler Community Center. Present were Committee members Jill Appel, Gordon Brockway, Sue Felshin (clerk), Gilda Gussin, Bill Lehr, Brad Hubbard-Nelson, Annie Moore, and Alan Whitney (chair). Also present were Jan Aceti (CMLP Energy Conservation Coordinator), Pamela Cady (Concord/Carlisle Energy Manager), and residents Brian Foulds and Eric Reinhart.

### **Minutes**

Mr. Lehr moved to approve the minutes of Dec. 1, as amended. Ms. Gussin seconded. All **VOTED** in favor except for Ms. Appel, who abstained. Mr. Hubbard-Nelson moved to approve the minutes of Dec. 12. Ms. Appel seconded. All **VOTED** in favor.

### **Upcoming Committee meetings**

According to regular scheduling, the next two meetings are planned to take place on February 9 and March 8.

### **Annual report**

The chair distributed a copy of the Committee's annual report which was submitted to the Town. (See List of Attachments.) Discussion included whether the report should have included more about future plans or whether the annual report is supposed to report the past year's actions, and whether the report should have been more specific about the DOER's position on communities that are behind on reaching Green Communities goals. [Gordon Brockway arrived.]

### **Report on Select Board meeting of 4 January re Energy Task Force**

Ms. Appel reported on the Select Board meeting of 4 January, attended by herself, Alan Whitney, and Gordon Brockway. Ms. Appel presented to the Select Board some of the Committee's prior money-saving sustainability efforts. The Select Board did not support the Committee's proposed warrant article on the grounds that the Committee should have gone through the standard budgeting process, but members of the Select Board expressed favorable opinions regarding the Committee's sustainability efforts and suggested to the Town Manager that he try to find funding for Committee projects within the budget. Select Board chair Alice Kaufman presented her proposal for an Energy Task Force to the Select Board. Discussion included: If the Town Manager can find funding as suggested, this might make the Heat Pump Challenge possible even though the Committee's proposed article will not go on the Warrant; the Committee should indicate its support for the Energy Task Force; the Energy Task Force's proposed coverage is essentially the same as the Committee's; the Energy Task Force is proposed to have a broader range of stakeholders, as in the original Committee charge; the Committee may be able to assist the Energy Task Force and/or should have a member on the Energy Task Force.

It was further noted by Ms. Kaufman that the membership of the Committee doesn't match the Committee charge on the Town website. Discussion included: The Town had trouble finding volunteers to fill the specific stakeholder slots, which closely resemble the proposed slots for the Energy Task Force. The Committee delivered a proposal for an updated charge, with fewer restrictions on membership, to the Town Manager, who has been using the new charge in appointing members. The update was not carried through to the website. The Chair will investigate whether the updated charge was formally adopted in accordance with procedure.

### **Report on meeting with Bouzha Cookman**

Mr. Whitney met with Bouzha Cookman of Mothers Out Front, who plan to submit a warrant article for net zero energy planning; he also received a note from Ms. Cookman (see List of Attachments). Several

other Committee members were separately contacted by Ms. Cookman. Discussion included: Ms. Cookman's position is that it is critical for the article for the Committee to support it due to the Committee's leadership role on sustainability; the article needs to more clearly define net zero energy; Select Board support seems unlikely at the moment; Ms. Cookman indicated that Mothers Out Front might not move their article if the proposed Energy Task Force incorporates net zero energy goals that sufficiently align with their own goals. Several Committee members spoke in favor of net zero energy planning without expressing an opinion either for or against the specific net zero energy goals of Mothers Out Front.

Ms. Felshin moved that the Committee express its support to the Select Board for an Energy Task Force, for a Committee role in the Energy Task Force, and for incorporating net zero planning into the Energy Task Force. Mr. Hubbard-Nelson seconded. All **VOTED** in favor.

The Committee further discussed designating Committee members to serve as a point of contact with Mothers Out Front. Mr. Lehr and Ms. Gussin volunteered.

### **Proposal for Sawyer Trust funding of WWTP light upgrade**

Ms. Aceti reported that Carlos DeSouza of GGD Engineering looked for municipal energy saving opportunities at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Most were rejected due to the need for a new natural gas pipeline, which would be expensive and a new commitment to fossil fuels. The remaining opportunity is a lighting upgrade (see List of Attachments) with a preliminary estimate of a cost of \$19,000 and a payback of 7.6 years, or 5.2 years with Light Plant rebate. The cost of obtaining a detailed audit and specification is low enough to proceed without a Request For Proposals, but a quote is required. Discussion included: Does the payback include the cost of having a detailed specification drawn up?; prior approved projects have not included such costs in calculations of payback; the Light Plant rebate should not be considered as part of payback.

Ms. Appel moved that the Committee recommend to the Town Manager an expenditure of \$3,500 from the Sawyer Trust Fund for a lighting design for the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Mr. Lehr seconded. All **VOTED** in favor.

Ms. Aceti noted that the Trustees of Town Donations must receive instructions by their Jan. 26 meeting or else action will be delayed until they next meet three months later. She asked the Committee whether its recommendation is contingent on payback being less than eight years; Committee members responded that it is not.

### **Green Your Heat status/discussion/plans**

Ms. Cady gave an update: Residents are continuing to enter the program. The waiting list for reviews is down from 56 households to 10. There are 20–25 rebates still available; 71 projects have been completed; the average rebate is \$908. The Town may reach its goal in households but will probably not expend all the funds. A second round of letters was sent to high heat loss homes. Ms. Cady and Ms. Aceti extended the Sagewell contract by two weeks to the end of January using funds that would have covered reviews. DOER has said that grant money can be spent on "a few stragglers" in the next year but the bulk of funds must be expended by the deadline. After the program ends, Ms. Cady will deliver a report on "lessons learned" to the Committee. The projected GHG savings are the equivalent of removing 48 cars from the roads annually. The Mass Save program has seen a boost in Concord, due to the previous harsh winter plus GYH. Ms. Cady has asked DOER if Concord can repurpose unexpended funds, probably on the order of \$3,000, for other projects such as LED conversion at the library. Approximately 15 natural gas customers have expressed disappointment that GYH was not available to them because they found the Mass Save program to be unhelpful. Perhaps the Town could run a GYH-like program that would connect natural gas customers in Concord with vetted Mass save contractors.

Committee members complimented Ms. Cady on her creative thinking in a time of tight budgeting.

### **Green Communities status**

Ms. Aceti reported interest from the Library Corporation, which she will report on in more detail at an upcoming meeting. The Town has hired Jana Dengler for the facilities manager position; she started her position on Jan. 4 and will report to the Assistant Town Manager.

### **Heat Pump Challenge update/status**

Mr. Brockway reported that the overall strategy is to green the electrical grid and to move heating and transportation to the electrical grid. Oil prices are currently so low that oil customers have no economic incentive to move to heat pumps, but heat pumps could still be a good move for ETS and propane customers and for people who are buying or upgrading A/C and water heaters.

Ms. Aceti reported that the Light Plant is developing a rebate program and investigating working with a vendor to analyze Smart Meter data. ETS customers all have Smart Meters already. The Light Plant anticipates signing a contract in several weeks. Discussion included: The Light Plant should calculate payback time; the Light Plant should use a savings rather than incentives approach. Ms. Aceti commented that the rebate should incentivize the carbon savings and that the Light Plant would consider the benefit to itself in gaining customers and would include the societal cost of CO<sub>2</sub>; heat pumps may be disadvantageous for the Light Plant because they affect winter monthly transmission peaks, and may affect summer peaks as well if used for A/C.

### **Net-metering proposal on Town Warrant**

Brian Foulds of 33 Riverdale Rd. spoke to the Committee about his citizen's petition warrant article (see List of Attachments): It is not about net metering, but rather time-of-use rates, and requests that the Light Plant create a subcommittee to examine rate structures—customer cost vs. Light Plant cost—and revenue decoupling, namely collecting for costs of fixed assets in a fixed manner rather than according to electricity usage. If Light Plant customers can see their electricity usage through Smart Meters and are incentivized to change their behavior, the Light Plant will look more attractive to electricity providers. The town of Marblehead achieved a 40% reduction in electricity usage through Smart Metering and peak pricing, avoiding the need to build more capacity into the grid. Mr. Foulds was asked why he has put forward a warrant article rather than the Light Board pursuing the ideas; Mr. Foulds noted that rate restructuring is complex and it is unreasonable to expect the Light Board to take on this task on top of its current responsibilities, and also that decoupling would make the Committee's work easier since the Light Plant would have fewer financial barriers to implementing sustainable energy measures. Discussion included: The article is detailed for Town Meeting and would be better handled in the executive branch; people may use more electricity if they overcool their house in the morning to avoid cooling during an afternoon peak, so the savings from reduced capacity needs is a critical component of this idea; the Committee should take a formal position on the warrant article before Town Meeting, but need not make a decision at this time; the Chair should see what the Light Board's thoughts are. Mr. Foulds commented that his proposal is about rate structures only, and that study may show that time-of-use rates would not be the optimal rate restructuring, but the goal of the subcommittee would be to figure these issues out.

### **Strategic Planning**

Due to the lateness of the hour, further work on strategic planning was postponed. Discussion included: The Committee needs to take up strategic planning earlier in meetings, or in special meetings, because it is taking too long to complete the process of strategic planning; Ms. Cady should collect comments from members and distribute them in a pre-meeting packet to speed discussion at the next meeting; Committee members should review the Committee's 2011 Energy Master Plan before submitting comments to Ms. Cady.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Hubbard-Nelson noted some upcoming events around town: Mothers Out Front will present information about net zero energy at the next ConcordCAN coffee on Jan. 19 and at a forum on Feb. 2 where representatives from Cambridge will describe development of that city's net zero goals, and Mr. Hubbard-Nelson will teach an eight-session energy course through Community Education.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 10pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Felshin, clerk

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**List of Attachments**

1. CSEC Year End Report - 2015 (final1).doc
2. GYH Sign-up Graph.doc
3. Concord WWTP Lighting Design Quote GGD010516.pdf
4. GGDreportpreliminarywalkthrough052115.pdf
5. RD TOUR CPP overview.pdf