

CITY OF CONCORD
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF JANUARY 26, 2022

The Concord Energy and Environment Advisory Committee met at 6:00 p.m., on January 26, 2022.

Attendees: Rob Werner, Henry Herndon, Chuck Willing (virtual), Jerry Eaton, Jessica Forrest, Jennifer Galbraith, Dot Currier, Jeff Evans, Nick Babladelis, Councilor Stacy Brown

Absent: Carl Cooley, Councilor Byron Champlin

Staff: Sam Durfee

Guest(s): Jenita and Grace, students at Concord High School

I. Welcome and Introductions

Rob Werner calls the meeting to order at 6:04pm

Jerry moves to approve the December EEAC minutes. Jessica notes that Chuck has been added to the absent list. Dot seconds. Motion passes unanimously with one abstention (Henry Herndon).

II. Committee Membership

- City Council representation
 - Councilor McNamara is no longer a member of the EEAC
 - Two new Council Representatives: Councilor Byron Champlin and Councilor Stacy Brown
- Chair position
 - Mayor Bouley has asked Rob Werner to continue on as EEAC Chair and the re-appointment is in process.

III. Municipal Projects Update

- Briar Hydro Net Metering
 - Nick Babladelis thoroughly reviewed the agreement and reported back to the Committee. The term of the agreement is 18 years.
 - Unutil is also interested in collaborating with the City on energy projects. Unutil benefits from load reduction, or local generation at their Distribution level (below the Transmission level). Senate Bill 321 is important to enable development of local generators and storage, interconnected to the distribution grid, that Concord or Concord Community Power could source power from.
 - There is also interest in the West Portsmouth Street lot; NextEra had been working to develop 10 megawatts of solar on that site.
- LED Streetlights
 - The conversion of ~2,100 streetlights to LED is complete.

- Public Events/Press Conference
 - Manchester flipped the switch on a 3.3-megawatt array recently as a result of the passage of House Bill 315 last year and the municipal net metering expansion.

IV. 2022 Policy Priorities/Planning

- Policy Categories
 - Community Gardens Water Access
 - Councilor McNamara and Jerry did excellent work following up on this project. There is a state committee/body that Jerry and Councilor McNamara are following up with that has jurisdiction over the land in question. Jerry will make a list of issues to be discussed with the City (once we better understand the State's perspective). Questions remain about who will be responsible for maintenance. For example, will the City be willing to enter into a joint-use-type lease agreement and be responsible for maintenance?
 - Laconia had a community garden on state lands with solar panels, and their panels were stolen; one option would be to store the panels in a secure place (e.g., the locked shed-type structure on which the panels are mounted) in the winter (when people don't need water for their gardens)
 - Sustainability Director Position Description
 - Draft position description should be broad and can draw from 100% RE Strategic Plan; draft can be reviewed by EEAC and then shared with City Manager. Jessica is working on this.
- Community Engagement
- UNH Sustainability Fellow Update
 - Concord submitted a workplan for a Fellow to take the data Amina, the previous Fellow, gathered for the GHG inventory and enter it into Clear Path's modeling software; Jessica is also looking at quantifying value of the city's forest, trees, green infrastructure to offset emissions. The workplan and \$4,000 cost has been approved by City Council. Next steps are to review candidate list and respond with top choices to invite for interviews. The pool of applicants is national, and remote work may be an option. The Fellowship runs for 10-12 weeks during the summer.
 - One option is for Jenita to help with recruiting student volunteers from Concord HS to help with data entry and potentially other aspects of the project. The next step would be for the student volunteers to work with Sam Durfee to get an ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) Login and get trained in how to use the program.
 - EEAC discusses the frequency/interval at which GHG inventories should be repeated (annually, longer) and how this could be supported by a Fellow (for example). Even requesting the data annually could be valuable, even if it couldn't be readily analyzed annually; so it is acquired for future analysis.

V. 2022 State Legislative Priorities

- Energy Efficiency Update
 - Last year, the PUC issued an order that would have gutted energy efficiency policy in NH. Good progress has been made on a bi-partisan legislative response (House Bill 549) that would keep funding for energy efficiency

(through NHSaves) level for the next three years (instead of slashing funding as the PUC Order would have done). Broad agreement from the energy efficiency industry, advocates, state, utilities and other parties that this is a good solution. Could be signed as soon as February.

- What are the opportunities to revive Weatherize Concord? Jessica heard from Ben Stephenson at Unitil that there is such a backlog of wait-listed customers waiting to be weatherized, that recruiting more people may be problematic. Perhaps EEAC can help re-engage the waitlisted people (unless Unitil or the contractor does that). Councilor Brown was on the waitlist, was called by Unitil who said they are in limbo until the policy/legislative issues are resolved. Jessica can follow up with Horizon Energy and utility points of contact. Jessica heard from CAP about low-income weatherization, who has been plugging away but has had to lower incentives from \$20,000 to \$8,000; legislation could bring them back up to the higher incentives for low-income.
- Net Metering Expansion
 - Last year's legislation did not include the State as a public entity eligible for the net metering expansion. Legislation would expand to include the state and the University System as eligible for the net metering expansion.
- Transmission Tax Cut
 - SB 321 and HB 1635 create a marketplace for NH energy storage and generation between 1-5 megawatts, alleviate out-of-state electric costs, and do so without subsidy or mandate.
- PUC adopted Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire's draft rules for Community Power; the rulemaking will be completed later this year.

VI. New Hampshire Charitable Foundation

- Clean Energy Fund
 - Jessica and Rob met with NHCF learned that NHCF does not have a dedicated fund for individual carbon-reduction actions. NHCF suggested that Concord could set up a donor-advised fund, craft language for what the fund would be used for, with an initial capitalization of \$25,000, and then market it and have other donors contribute to the fund. There is not much support for municipalities specifically.

VII. Community Gardens Water Access

- Status and Next Steps

VIII. New Business

- Status and Next Steps:
 - i. Councilor Brown, priority setting session, tree committee. Wants to pursue a campaign by the City to plant 1,000 trees this year. This could unite a lot of groups, collaborators and stakeholders. The Tree Committee has some scholarship funding, we can involve the schools. Just 100 trees/ward!
 - ii. There is a new ad-hoc committee regarding Gully Hill Cornfields, lease is ending in December, discussion with city staff of putting community gardens in behind the post-office / Ace Hardware. 121 acres. Corner that faces the State House behind the river. Birch Street is looking to have someone take over their community gardens.

Jerry moves to adjourn. Nick seconds. Unanimously approved.