

Concord Energy and Environment Advisory Committee Meeting
July 12, 2022
6:00 PM
City Council Chambers

Attendees: Councilors Rob Werner and Stacey Brown, Nick Babladelis, Dot Currier, Sam Durfee (staff), Jerry Eaton, Jeff Evans, Jessica Forrest, Jennifer Galbraith

Absent: Councilor Byron Champlin, Carl Cooley, Jonathan Weinberg, Chuck Willing

Guests: Jenita Aquino-Patzan, Clara Feigelson

I. Welcome and Introductions

6:06 pm – *Rob Werner opens meeting followed by introductions*

6:11 pm – *Rob made motion to adopt minutes from June meeting. Jerry seconded. Unanimously approved.*

II. Recent and Upcoming Public Events

Briar Hydro press conference occurred recently which discussed Concord's net metering agreement with the facility. Article in Concord Monitor by David Brooks.

LED streetlights: August 11 City Council meeting. Ceremony planned with Until to celebrate LED streetlight transition. Until will present city with a symbolic check representing the \$600,000 to be saved over 10 years. Concord/Until replaced 2100 streetlights with LED during the end of 2021 and early 2022.

III. UNH Sustainability Fellow Work in Concord

Rob introduces Clara Feigelsen, who is the City of Concord/UNH Sustainability Fellow. She is visiting Concord this week for in-person meetings here and at UNH. Clara is pursuing her Master's degree at Colorado state in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions accounting. Her focus has been on land-based emissions.

Her project in Concord is to use ClearPath, a GHG inventory and scenario tool to project the impact of various policy and development scenarios on carbon emissions. She is also integrating land-based carbon sinks into our inventory for development/conservation scenario modeling. She is building on previous work completed by our former UNH SI Fellow Amina Grant to complete the city's first GHG emissions inventory in 2020.

Carbon emissions categories include: Energy usage from buildings, Streetlights and traffic facilities, Wastewater treatment, Industrial energy, Wastewater, Solid waste, Land Cover.

Scenario types and examples include: BAU scenarios (no action by Concord, e.g., ISO NE grid transitions), Policy/Regulatory Mitigation scenarios (top-down, e.g., LED retrofit, Community Power coalition strategies), community driven scenarios (bottom-up, e.g., homeowner/business adoptions of solar)

Rob: we are members of ICLEI so we have access to ClearPath for running these scenarios

Jeff: how does the tool distinguish between forest types and sequestration rates by different forest types?

Clara: Land based carbon tool is based on USGS National Land Cover Dataset (NLCD) – 30 m pixel data. Uses emissions and removal factors to calculate average carbon absorbed by forest type and age class. Can determine what emissions happening through fires, development, decomposition.

Stacey: Can you see a developer clearing a swath of forest or the quantity of emissions it would release?

Clara: Can estimate using a boundary of the development area

Nick: Mentions Global Forest Watch data to see historical change in forest cover for a quick assessment. He has used this at St. Paul's School.

Notes that the role that forests play in carbon sequestration is already addressed in the global carbon budget so Concord can't officially count it towards our GHG inventory. Sees this work as more about co-benefits to community. Land needs to stay forested to realize the carbon benefit to 2100.

Rob: is there a way to set out different scenarios. For example, what benefit would a solar project in Concord have on our emissions?

Clara: Yes, this is the type of scenario that ClearPath can include.

What about offshore wind? Bureau of Ocean Management by 2024 lease areas for offshore wind. Should take 5-7 yrs to develop with opportunities for the grid to purchase.

Clara: ISO predicts by 2040 – 18.8% of New England grid will be offshore wind.

City currently gets competitive supply from Constellation energy

Dot: Are we stuck with natural gas for heat given our infrastructure?

Jessica: Concord's renewable energy plan recommends that private home and business owners weatherize and transition to renewable heat sources such as efficient electric heat (e.g., air source heat pumps).

Rob: Auburn, Maine - Efficiency Maine – town is using ARPA funds to help install heat pumps. Maine is taking proactive statewide steps to transition to renewable energy.

Clara: important to electrify heating sooner rather than later

Jerry: Utility sponsored energy conservation programs recently resurrected, which is good.

Nick: Could be opportunity for community education on green energy. City hasn't adopted 5 MW and ½ MW solar installations – what impact does that have on city emissions?

Rob: Can Clara present results at September City Council meeting remotely? Clara agreed to that schedule.

Nick: Asked about continued data tracking

Sam: Thinks data should be better organized in the long term with ClearPath; easier to track emissions changes.

Clara: Will attend/present at Conservation Commission tomorrow evening – 7pm

IV. Other Business

Rob and Sam: Want to pick up on priorities identified at planning and visioning session in September 2021. Take each one forward. Committee members asked to read through and get back to Sam and Rob on priorities we want to work on.

Rob: Sustainability Director – not in this year's budget. Got placeholder status in next year's budget proposal.

Stacey: Wants to work on economic benefits of bike trails – can we put advocacy into this

Rob won't be here to lead the July 27th meeting. Stacey agreed to chair it.

Rob: NH Saves is back to work. When should we revive Weatherize Concord? Thinking about early next year after getting through the current backlog of residents, if NH Saves has availability to sign up new Concord residents for the program. Perhaps combine with a solarize campaign.

Rob: Escalator for energy efficiency budget is based on 3-year average of CPI. Due to the fact inflation is high, will this mean that the energy efficiency program budget will increase?

Rob: Concord School District – Jack Dunn is applying for EV school buses

Nick: Perhaps a committee member can approach Concord Coach and ask about their plan?

Rob: CEEAC vacancy from Henry Herndon. Who should fill this?

Stacey: Certain groups not represented. Thinks we should try to make an effort to include those groups. Increase representation in terms of racial, geographic, socioeconomic, 'green lifestyle' diversity.

Jerry: Or, we could recruit someone from business, Chamber of Commerce, Grappone group, Concord Hospital as a means of encouraging big businesses to become greener.

Rob: Anything else?

Stacey: Would like to advocate for an off-road bike/multi-use connection to improve connectivity for bikes from Merrimack Greenway (river/downtown/NHTI area) to west Concord. Penacook and Auburn streets are not safe for bikes.

Rob: *Requests motion to adjourn. Jeff initiates the motion, Jennifer seconds. All approved.*