

**Concord Energy and Environment Advisory Committee (CEEAC)**  
**Tuesday, January 31, 2023**  
**6:00 PM**  
**City Council Chambers**

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**Attendees:** Rob Werner (chair), Councilor Stacey Brown, Councilor Byron Champlin, Carl Cooley, Dot Currier, Jeffrey Evans, Jennifer Galbraith, Jonathan Weinberg, Chuck Willing, Grace Ciu (student representative), Frances Lesser (student representative), Heather Shank (City Planner), Alec Bass (Senior Planner)

**Absent:** Nick Babladelis, Jessica Forrest, Gerald Eaton

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Chairman Rob Werner opened the meeting.

The CEEAC unanimously accepted minutes from December 8, 2022 meeting.

Rob apologized for causing the regularly-scheduled January 25 meeting to be postponed and said that Councilor Champlin would run future meetings if Rob is absent.

**II. Municipal Projects**

Community Power

Rob reported that FPAC had approved joining the Community Power Coalition subject to review by City Attorney Jim Kennedy. Attorney Kennedy is still reviewing the Agreement, has talked to Cliff Below and is seeking answers to some questions that he has. Rob anticipates that Attorney Kennedy will respond to FPAC soon and that FPAC will make a final endorsement at its February 21 meeting. Thereafter, Rob hopes that the issue will be noticed to the City Council at its March 13 meeting and scheduled for a public hearing at its April 10 meeting. A final council vote could come either immediately following the public hearing or at a subsequent Council meeting.

Dot mentioned a Derry community power hearing that was informative. Rob mentioned that Clean Energy NH is doing a webinar on community power. Byron thinks the Community Power Coalition has a FAQ document that could be circulated.

Members expect that the CEEAC will participate in the anticipated April public hearing, including both presenting the CEEAC's viewpoint and mobilizing the public to attend.

## Solar Development

Rob reported that the Concord General Services Department has been talking to New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) about a potential opportunity to access grant money funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). General Services wishes to apply to NHDES for a \$250,000 ARPA-funded grant that would help finance a solar project at the Hall Street Wastewater Treatment Plant, and is requesting City Council authorization to submit the grant application. Rob expects that the Council will consider approving this request at its February 13 meeting. Rob intends to testify in support of the request, and invited other CEEAC members to attend and testify if they wish.

Lodestar Energy is talking to Concord School District about potentially installing solar energy projects on School District property, and is also interested in discussing possible solar projects on City property and/or on private sites in Concord.

Heather asked whether there are any solar-related bills pending in the state legislature. Rob said that there are some bills that propose to expand net metering in various ways.

### **III. Paris Agreement Local Stocktake Project**

At the December 8 meeting, the CEEAC supported the idea of doing a “Stocktake” project. The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), an organization in which Concord is a member, recommends that member communities do a local stocktake every five years, convening stakeholders to discuss climate change issues at the municipal level. We would aim to do our stocktake at a three-hour meeting in the first part of April. At the meeting, the participants would discuss “where are we now” and “where do we want to go” with regard to climate action.

The working group established at the December 8 meeting will try to meet during the first week of February to begin to plan the event.

Concord would be one of the first communities to do a Stocktake event.

### **IV. UNH Sustainability Institute Project Follow-up**

There was nothing to report on this agenda item.

### **V. Policy and Policy Updates**

## State Legislation

There is little to report on state legislation at this point since no hearings have been scheduled.

There is interest in building EV charging infrastructure in Concord. Rob discussed this with James Penfold of ReVision Energy. City Engineer Jonathan Rice told Rob that commercial EV charging stations are assessed for property taxes. The CEEAC discussed whether a tax exemption would help encourage more EV charging stations and also whether a tax exemption would be allowed under state law. Councilor Brown and Jeff will look more into this.

#### Weatherize/Solarize

The possibility of a Weatherize campaign in the future was discussed.

#### Announcements/Other Business

Rob and Jonathan discussed inviting Matt Cashman and/or Jack Dunn from Concord School District come to a future CEEAC meeting and discuss the District's plans for solar and other environmental initiatives. Rob also discussed inviting Sam Evans-Brown of Clean Energy NH to come to one of our meetings.

Councilor Champlin said that a constituent approached him asking if the City could facilitate the placement of "Constituent Compostable Bins" around the community to accept organic waste, serving residents who are not able to compost on their own. The CEEAC discussed examples of other communities that might already be doing this in some form (Keene, Derry, Burlington VT). Jeff recalled that a commercial provider might have offered these services for a time and it didn't go well. Councilor Champlin and others will follow up.

Grace recalled that the Concord High School environmental club might have done a composting project.

Councilor Brown received a constituent inquiry about single use plastics and asked if we should explore the possibility of a single-use plastic ban. The CEEAC discussed that we believe municipalities are prevented by state law from regulating waste and plastics in the private sector, but have more leeway with regard to municipal operations and municipal property. Portsmouth has successfully banned styrofoam cups in city parks. Councilor Brown and others will follow up on this to see what might be feasible.

#### **VI. Next Meeting**

The next CEEAC meeting is on Wednesday, February 22 at 6:00 pm in the City Council Chambers.

A motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.