

Concord Energy and Environment Advisory Committee
Wednesday, March 27, 2024
6:00 PM
City Council Chambers
MINUTES

Attendees: Councilor Jeffrey Foote, Councilor Stacey Brown, Rob Werner, Chuck Willing, Carl Cooley, Nick Babladelis, Dot Currier, Allen Desbiens, Gerald Eaton, Jennifer Galbraith, Beth Fenstermacher (Director, Projects and Strategic Initiatives).

Guests: Henry Herndon, Andrew Hatch, Community Power Coalition, Joseph Kwasnik

Absent: Jeffrey Evans, Elliot Clendenning and Frances Lesser (student representatives).

I. Welcome and Introductions

Rob Werner, Chairperson, opened the meeting at 6:04 PM. Chuck welcomed Henry Herndon and Andrew Hatch from the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH). Henry is a former member of the CEEAC. Andrew is a Concord business owner and will act as the City's liaison with CPCNH and assist us in moving toward a launch of Community Power in Concord.

The draft minutes of the February 28, 2024 monthly meeting were distributed. A motion was made by Allen Desbiens, seconded by Carl Cooley to accept the Minutes of February 28, 2024. It was VOTED unanimously to accept those minutes

II. Community Power Discussion

Rob and others who attended the City Council meeting on March 11, 2024 described the discussion and deliberations of the CEEAC's recommendation to proceed with Concord Community Power. The City Council appreciated all the work that the CEEAC had invested in their recommendation. The Staff's Report was recognized as particularly helpful and informative. Beth and Chuck were recognized for all their efforts they contributed to the final recommendation. Henry Herndon explained the various efforts and tools the Community Power Coalition will bring to the effort prior to launch. ICLEI has resources that the CEEAC can tap to help with the education effort the summer UNH fellow will perform.

There was a discussion of some final edits that will go into the plan. There was agreement on eliminating the dual option of going with a broker. The City Council has accepted the Coalition approach, and the Council can always change the approach after the PUC approval. Language will be added to address how to handle the launch of the program in the potential though unlikely situation that the Concord Community Power

default rate is lower than one utility's default power rate but higher than the other utility's default power rate (keeping in mind that the vast majority of Concord residences are served by Unitil and a small number are served by Eversource).

A MOTION was made by Jerry Eaton, Seconded by Councilor Stacey Brown to approve the March 27, 2024 Concord Community Power Electric Aggregation Plan, subject to pending modifications at this meeting and further review of those modifications with the intent of filing the final plan with the NH PUC by April 5, 2024. After discussion where comments are due by April 3, 2024, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the Motion.

Chuck Willing was appointed as Concord's primary representative to the Community Power Coalition by City Manager Aspell. Beth Fenstermacher was appointed as the alternative representative. Chuck then nominated himself as a candidate for the Coalition's Board of Directors in anticipation of the Coalition's annual meeting on April 25, 2024. Chuck and Joe Kwasnik will serve as two initial members of a Community Power Working Group that will discuss and develop proposals for possible future enhancements and next steps for the further development of Concord's community power program after launch, including whether Concord should consider using an adder to fund energy improvements. Beth suggested a representative from the City's Fiscal Policy Advisory Committee be included in those discussions. A public engagement plan to further educate the public regarding community power prior to the launch of the program will be considered at the Committee's April 24 meeting.

III. Policy and Project updates

Solar RFP for the City Landfill – Beth Fenstermacher reported that the lease is in its final stages as is an agreement on payment in lieu of taxes. Group net metering details are being worked out as is the interconnection agreement with Unitil. The developer, Kearsarge Energy, may be submitting an application to the Planning Board for approval in May. Surveying of the site and design work by Kearsarge has begun.

The City has the option of reducing its group net-metering percentage from Briar Hydro in anticipation of the Landfill Solar Project. The School District plans to take some of the freed-up supply (25%), and the City is pursuing other off-takers, possibly Merrimack County and others, to take some or all of the rest. The restrictions on Briar Hydro only selling to customers within Concord have been relaxed by legislation.

Lodestar Energy is developing plans for a solar project off of West Portsmouth Street. This is a private developer so there is no opportunity for collaboration with the CEEAC. Lodestar's submission to the Planning Board was incomplete; therefore, consideration of Lodestar's project will be put off to a later meeting of the Planning Board

Rob reported that he and Beth have interviewed all three candidates they selected for the summer fellowship position through UNH. There was clearly one standout, but that candidate took another fellowship. The successful college or graduate student would work on community engagement and outreach focusing on Community Power.

Upon MOTION by Chuck Willing, seconded by Councilor Jeff Foote, it was unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 8:20 PM.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, April 24 at 6:00PM.