

Concord Energy and Environment Advisory Committee
Wednesday, April 24, 2024
6:00 PM
City Council Chambers
MINUTES

Attendees: Councilor Jeffrey Foote, Councilor Stacey Brown, Rob Werner, Chuck Willing, Dot Carrier, Gerald Eaton, Jennifer Galbraith, Elliot Clendenning (student representative), Beth Fenstermacher (Staff liaison, Director of Special Projects and Strategic Initiatives).

Guests: Henry Herndon and Madelyn Bradley, Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire.

Absent: Carl Cooley, Nick Babladelis, Allen Desbiens, Jeffrey Evans, and Frances Lesser (student representative).

I. Welcome and Introductions

Rob Werner, Chairperson, opened the meeting at 6:04 PM. Rob welcomed Henry Herndon and Madelyn Bradley from the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH). Henry is a former member of the CEEAC. Madelyn is Communications Coordinator for the CPCNH. Henry and Madelyn and others at CPCNH will assist us in moving toward a launch of Community Power in Concord.

The draft minutes of the March 27, 2024 monthly meeting were previously distributed. A motion was made by Councilor Brown, seconded by Jennifer Galbraith to accept the Minutes of the March 27, 2024 meeting. It was VOTED unanimously to accept those minutes

II. Policy and Project updates

Solar RFP for the City Landfill – Beth Fenstermacher reported Unitil is moving its poles and wires out of the lease space at no cost to the City or the developer, Kearsarge Energy. Kearsarge is awaiting a proposed interconnection agreement from Unitil and may submit their application to the Planning Board in May.

The City has the option of reducing its purchases from Briar Hydro in anticipation of the Landfill Solar Project. The School District will take some of the freed-up supply (25%) from Briar as well as supply from the Landfill project. There are discussions with Merrimack County to be part of the group net-metering for the Landfill.

Lodestar Energy is developing plans for a 6.49 Mw solar project off of West Portsmouth Street. Lodestar has corrected its submission to the Planning Board which ought to be considered at the May meeting of the Planning Board. If enacted and signed by the Governor, HB 1600 could allow the Lodestar project to supply a portion of the Concord Community Power load through CPCNH.

Rob reported that Jennifer Punsalang-Cloutier of Keene, New Hampshire has been chosen for the UNH sustainability fellowship in Concord this summer. She will work from May 30 through mid-August. Jennifer will work on community engagement and outreach focusing on Community Power. She has experience in community engagement. She may work some time remotely from Keene; however, Clean Energy N. H. has offered some space for her to work locally. She may have time to begin plans for a new Weatherize/Solarize campaign to be launched later this year.

III. Community Power –Public Engagement Discussion

The CEEAC discussed development of a community power public engagement plan with Mr. Herndon and Ms. Bradley. The discussion assumed a potential program launch date in October 2024. The final Concord Community Power Plan has been submitted to the NH Public Utilities Commission. The PUC has up to sixty days to review Concord's plan; however, the PUC has been turning the most recent community power plans submissions around in less time. The Plan also needs to be approved by City Council, but it is not required to get PUC approval prior to City Council approval. The current intent is to get the Plan and CPCNH cost sharing agreement and related items on the consent agenda for the City Council's May 13 meeting.

There are certain requirements to be carried out for Concord Community Power before a launch. CPCNH must obtain customer information from Unitil and Eversource on Concord's behalf, and will do so after the approvals of the Concord Plan are complete. CPCNH will send letters to all customers (the "mail drop") approximately 35 days before enrollment (30 days is the statutory minimum). August 26 was discussed as a potential mail drop date. The mail drop will trigger the opening of a CPCNH-created Concord Community Power contact website (CPCNH.org/Concord) with a toll-free number where customers can opt out or choose other offerings than the default offering. A public information meeting must be held within 15 days of the mail drop. A window of September 2 to September 10 was discussed as a possible timeframe for a public information meeting. The CEEAC discussed holding up to two additional meetings beyond the statutorily-required one, perhaps at different locations, in order to reach more Concord residents.

There was a discussion of various outreach methods to engage the public and inform them of the coming changes with Community Power. A Concord Community Power logo

will be designed by July which will be used on educational materials that will be developed. Mr. Herndon and Ms. Bradley displayed posters and banner designs that could be used. Ms. Fenstermacher distributed a list of Community Outreach Options prepared by Stefanie Breton, the City's public information officer. Listed Outreach Options are Communication Channels that the City customarily uses to disseminate information to the public. The CEEAC discussed potentially holding an event with a bank of computers at the Public Library for customers to choose options if they don't have a computer at home, with assistance from CEEAC. Persons (CEEAC committee members) can be stationed at local events to pass out information and answer questions. The CEEAC could work with Concord TV to create an instructional video on how to use the Concord Community Power website. The CEEAC discussed upcoming community events (e.g., Market Days, National Night Out, the Multi-Cultural Festival, the Farmers' Market, beginning of school events) at which the CEEAC could be present to promote the Concord Community Power Program, and important community groups (e.g., the Chamber, Rotary clubs, the Unitarian Universalist Church) that the CEEAC should try to talk or present to.

The CEEAC briefly discussed messaging at different stages between now and the launch date. More detailed information will be available from the time of the mail drop but general information about what residents can expect (community power is coming, likely timing, how it will work) can and should be shared before that point.

Mr. Herndon and Ms. Bradley will deliver a template of a Public Engagement Plan. Rob Werner will then create and share a Google doc to contain the template/draft with the committee. The committee members can access and edit the draft plan to work out all of the tasks and assignments. The CEEAC expects to finalize the plan at its May 22 meeting.

Chuck Willing summarized the community power-related events since the March 27 meeting – Concord was admitted as a member of CPCNH, the Concord Community Power Plan was filed at the PUC, Concord has requested aggregate load data from Unitil and Eversource, and he is a candidate to join the CPCNH Board of Directors, to be voted on at the CPCNH annual meeting on April 25.

IV. Miscellaneous

The School Board has a Sustainability Committee which will hold its next meeting on April 30th. Someone from CEEAC will attend. Councilor Foote suggested the CEEAC ought to take up composting. He said the Northeast Resource Recovery Association had

presented valuable educational materials in Bedford schools. He asked that this subject be raised at the Sustainability Committee meeting.

Bow, Dunbarton and Weare will hold their annual Energy Expo on October 26th at the Bow Middle School. They asked the CEEAC if Concord's energy committee wanted to help out with planning and participation. Jennifer Galbraith volunteered to work with the Energy Expo folks in planning.

Jennifer Galbraith asked if we could begin our regular monthly committee meetings one half hour later. Upon MOTION by Councilor Brown, seconded by Dot Currier, it was unanimously VOTED to open future meetings at 6:30 PM.

Upon MOTION by Dot Currier, seconded by Jennifer Galbraith, it was unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 7:35 PM.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, May 22 at **6:30** PM.