

Concord Energy and Environment Advisory Committee
Wednesday, May 22, 2024
6:30 PM
City Council Chambers
MINUTES

Attendees: Councilor Jeffrey Foote, Councilor Stacey Brown, Nick Babladelis, Chuck Willing, Dot Currier, Gerald Eaton, Jennifer Galbraith, Elliot Clendenning and Frances Lesser (student representatives), Beth Fenstermacher (Staff, Director of Projects and Strategic Initiatives).

Guest: Jennifer Punsalang-Cloutier, UNH Sustainability Fellow

Absent: Rob Werner, Carl Cooley, Allen Desbiens, Jeffrey Evans.

Present:

I. Welcome and Introductions

Councilor Brown, acting as Chairperson, opened the meeting at 6:30 PM. The Chair recognized Jennifer Punsalang-Cloutier as our new UNH Sustainability Fellow. Beth explained that Jennifer was a recent graduate of Keene State College with a degree in Environmental Science and Sustainability. Introductions by the Committee members were made.

The draft minutes of the April 24, 2024 monthly meeting were previously distributed. A motion was made by Chuck Willing, seconded by Dorothy Currier, to accept the Minutes of the April 24, 2024 meeting. It was VOTED unanimously to accept those minutes, with one abstention from Nick Babladelis who did not attend the meeting.

II. Policy and Project updates

Solar RFP for the City Landfill – Beth Fenstermacher reported Unitil has received approval for its plans to move its poles and wires out of the lease space at no cost to the City or the developer, Kearsarge Energy. Kearsarge has received an interconnection study from Unitil and will proceed with final engineering studies.

III. Community Power – Status Report and Public Engagement Discussion

Chuck Willing, Concord's representative to the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH), was elected to CPCNH's Board on April 25, 2024. He will serve on the CPCNH Risk Management and Finance Committees. Beth Fenstermacher, Concord's alternative representative, will serve on the CPCNH Governance and Member Outreach Committees.

The discussion was focused on a program launch date in October 2024. The Final Concord Electric Aggregation Plan has been submitted to the NH Public Utilities Commission. Approval is expected by mid-June followed by City Council approval of the Final Plan. The CPCNH cost sharing and member services agreements were approved on the consent agenda for the City Council's May meeting. Utility and CPCNH electric rates for the period from August 1, 2024 to January 31, 2025 period will be known on June 27.

The Committee discussed the draft community power public engagement plan that was previously distributed to the Committee. There was a discussion of various outreach methods to engage the public and inform them of the coming changes with Community Power. Outreach will take place before and during the following steps that must take place before program launch. CPCNH will send letters to all customers (the "mail drop") approximately 35 days before enrollment (30 days is the statutory minimum). The currently expected date for the mail drop is August 23, 2024. The mail drop triggers the opening of a Concord Community Power contact website with a toll-free number and web site (CPCNH.org/Concord) where customers can opt out or choose other rate offerings than the default rate. By statute, one public informational meeting is required to be held within 15 days of the mail drop, expected sometime between September 2 and September 7. The Committee reaffirmed its intention to hold a second public information session around the same time period even though not statutorily required. The precise schedule will be determined in the next 1-2 months.

Beth Fenstermacher showed the Committee a Concord Community Power logo that was designed by CPCNH's consultant with input from Stefanie Breton. The logo will be used on program educational materials that will be developed. Nick Babladelis suggested that the Committee arrange for temporary (washable) tattoos with the Concord Community Power logo.

Jennifer Punsalang-Cloutier will have primary responsibility for further developing the public engagement plan and discussing it with the Committee at future meetings.

IV. Miscellaneous

Jennifer Galbraith told the Committee that she has been attending weekly planning meetings for an upcoming annual Energy Expo on October 26th at the Bow Middle School. Jennifer Galbraith explained that she can no longer participate due to work schedule. She looked to volunteers to work with the Energy Expo folks in planning. The Concord Greenspace Coalition may have members willing to join in this effort.

Upon MOTION by Nick Babladelis, seconded by Jennifer Galbraith, it was unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 7:45 PM.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, June 26 at 6:30 PM.