

## **Energy and Climate Action Committee**

Minutes – 9/13/2022

(Approved 10/11/22)

*Virtual Meeting*

**Members Present:** Michael DeChiara, Miriam DeFant, Gail Fleischaker, Leslie Cerier, Zoe Weizenbaum, Nate Heard, Graeme Sephton

Chair's Call to Order at 7:02pm

Meeting is being recorded

Cerier will do minutes for October 11 meeting.

### **Minutes:**

**8/23/22: Motion: Sephton moves to approve 8/23/22 minutes. Heard seconds.**

DeChiara: we don't know who seconded the 5/21/22 minutes. Fleischaker indicated she did.

Minutes edited to reflect this. **Vote: DeChiara: aye; DeFant: aye; Fleischaker: aye; Cerier: aye; Weizenbaum: aye; Heard: aye; Sephton: aye.**

**Our Town Article Submission:** Heard drafted an article for the town newsletter and has submitted it.

**Community Choice Aggregation Proposal:** Chair, Heard, and Fleischaker met with the Select Board to discuss proposed warrant article for Town Meeting approval. Select Board voted to consider the proposed warrant article for the next Special Town Meeting in the late fall or early winter. Proposal must be approved by Town Meeting to move forward. Discussed strategies for educating public about the process. DeFant: suggest creating a FAQs on ECAC homepage and then broadcast info on Town email, Nextdoor, etc. Info on homepage can be shared as a link. Fleischaker offered to draft content for the website. Goal is to sponsor a community forum to encourage engagement and support. DeFant: if post on social media, should make sure that ECAC is clear to public that Town officials cannot respond online to questions. Fleischaker will draft announcement language. Suggested edits can be submitted to her.

Sephton: should not be difficult to explain to the public; many towns in state are doing it now; important points are that it can save residents money on electricity and involves no financial risk to the Town or any individual; people can opt in or opt out; individuals can opt to have electricity package with more renewable energy. DeFant: ECAC should inquire about impact on net metering for solarized households. Sephton: can keep net metering; anything in your deficit will be charged at the rate of the CCA package. Fleischaker: would be good to get this clarified by National Grid. Sephton: we could reach out to a CCA town and see how it works for net metering customers.

Date for community forum: 11/9 from 7-8:30 pm. Sephton: forum presentation should make it clear that CCA is not overly complicated or controversial; half of communities in state are doing it; important to make clear there is no financial risk to Town or individuals; might save money and can have a choice to prioritize use of renewables in electricity supply. ECAC discussed whether to have an outside speaker talk about the role of the broker or someone from a CCA town. DeChiara will edit a video of Heard's Select Board presentation for the ECAC homepage.

ECAC discussed structure of warrant article, whether to make it 1 or 2 questions. Heard: main question is to allow the Town to move forward and empower the Select Board to engage a broker; some towns add a 2<sup>nd</sup> question requesting that one of the objectives of the proposal be to reduce the carbon footprint of the community. This could impact what percent of green electricity is presented as an option; the risk would be that could win the 1<sup>st</sup> vote but lose the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Fleischaker: have any other towns failed a vote on the 2<sup>nd</sup> question? What is the risk? DeFant: suggest wording the warrant question as one question with two priorities: cost savings and green energy. DeChiara agrees; don't want to set up a dichotomy; we can advance both goals. Fleischaker: we cannot guarantee a savings; it is presumed the costs will be lower but cannot guarantee. DeChiara: this proposal should save households money. Cerier: what happened with the discussion about community solar? DeChiara: the design of options in CCA takes place later in the process; Town has to approve the motion, get a broker, get approval by DOER and DPW, go back to the Town for approval of a plan. At that point, ECAC can recommend specific options; we can include a values statement but should steer clear of defining the buckets in the warrant article. Heard: would be good to have the warrant article written in understandable language. DeChiara: ECAC will have a 1-page flyer to distribute at the Special Town Meeting. Cerier: expressed concerns about including solar energy produced by developers who use pesticides, etc. DeChiara: the energy broker will know what kinds of buckets can be defined; may be no way to verify the practices of the specific energy producers. Weizenbaum: at what stage does the Town become committed to a specific proposal? Heard: there are several veto opportunities; when the broker comes back with a proposal, the Select Board can accept the bids or reject them; the default situation is the present, which is an energy mix based upon fossil fuels. Cerier: would like to see the Town switch to Coop Power; she is using this and has had a good experience with it; don't have to cut forests for solar energy. DeChiara: will have to table community solar for another time.

**MVP/HMP Action Steps:** Chair shared a document via screenshare identifying various MVP and HMP priorities and action steps. ECAC discussed how to best prioritize various areas. ECAC members volunteered to serve as liaisons for various other parts of Town government and boards to discuss these priorities. ECAC members agree to reach out to various board chairs and ask for some time on an agenda to discuss how best to work with ECAC and to raise awareness about priorities identified in the MVP and HMP documents.

The now-disbanded Energy Committee had looked at various town-owned land parcels to evaluate their usefulness for future municipal solar projects. The Fire Department and Lot O-32 parcels had been discussed.

DeChiara: how can we support and incentivize individuals to become more green in lifestyle choices? Cerier and Weizenbaum agree to provide recommendations on this to ECAC. **Priorities discussed: municipal solar, incentives for residential solar and battery systems, sustainable living, and community solar.**

**Motion to adjourn:** Cerier; Sephton seconded. **Vote:** DeChiara: aye; DeFant: aye; Fleischaker: aye; Cerier: aye; Weizenbaum: aye; Heard: aye; Sephton: aye.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm**

**Next Meeting: October 11, 2022 at 7 pm**

*Respectfully submitted by Miriam DeFant, Member, 10/11/2022*