

ECAC Minutes 3/19/2024

Meeting called to order: by Michael DeChiara at 5:02pm

Members Present: Michael DeChiara, Gail Fleischaker, Isaac Goldstein, Nate Heard

Public Present: None present.

Minutes for next meeting: Gail

5:00 Agenda review

5:00 Public Comments: N/A

5:10: Continued items

- Update on PV vendor outreach {Gail}

Gail reviewed total net usage of electricity for municipal buildings. Town hall and fire department have installed solar and are currently net metered. She has estimated that we need an additional 34KW generation to gain carbon neutrality. This would account for a 300,000kWh annual usage of our town buildings, which is approximately 40,000 more than what we currently use on average.

In conversation with PV Squared, a rough analysis says that the Highway Department roof could accommodate around 20kW, though there are some considerations to be made like the state of roof. It would be important to consider its age and integrity. A structural analysis would be required to see if can support weight of such an array. We should also consider the town's plan for the use of the building in the future.

It would be good to involve the building committee to see about structural issues, as well as capital planning to really address the intricacies of this decision and planning toward a carbon neutral future for the town. There was discussion about trying to get together a meeting in May with all the aforementioned parties to discuss the issue – either inviting their chair to come to our ECAC meeting or inviting one of us to go to one of their meetings. - Action Item

There was a discussion about additional ground mounts and possible locations for these on town land, however there are wetlands behind Fire department and near the new library which may preclude ground mounting. SES is not deemed a possibility with roof integrity and shading issues, and ground mounts are most likely not wanted in areas accessible to children.

There were thoughts of other places we could get solar from, including leasing land that would be suitable. We should look into the roof replacement schedule for Highway Department, if there is one, and plan replacement to accommodate solar – particularly its strength and angle.

The new Library has a built in plan for solar that should provide for close to self-sufficiency, therefore removing them from calculations. There is a possibility to use the roof of the old Library building for a solar array if it is deemed viable.

Dream scenario could involve a Solar Canopy for the SES parking lot which would be costly, but create a lot of energy generation, and as an added bonus, the Highway department wouldn't need to plow.

Provide a printed handout explaining energy needs for Town Meeting. - Action Item

- Update on CCA status from Select Bd {Michael}

Non-Action, email sent to the Select Board with no reply – Michael will follow up with Becky one more time*. The recommendation to use Colonial Power Group as our broker for the CCA process would need to be on the select board agenda to be voted on. Nate will be contact point with CCA vendors.

- Update on electric chargers {Gail}

The offer for free is no longer on the table. Is it worth looking into the costs? Do we want EV chargers and if so, why? Do we care if they are Level 2 or DCFC? Who is the target population? Would we have EV chargers at the elementary school to supporting School Staff (ask Principal)? Nate will inquire of the Principal to get sense of wish/need of EV chargers for teachers and staff. Action Item

- Non-fossil fuel purchasing protocol {Michael}

Michael has to move forward with it. No update.

5:40 Debrief from Stretch Code info session; Vote on whether to recommend to SB for Town Meeting

Four people attended the Stretch Code info session and seemed to be interested. According to Nate there have been thirteen views of the recorded meeting that was posted to the town website.

Major Concerns:

Cost concerns. Costs more to build than to buy an existing home.

Making people put things into their houses that they do not want.

Issue of affordable housing. – made more affordable to live in / not to build.

Health of the air in your home if you have a very tight envelope. – Building to code would account for air exchange

So, there is little distinction between existing code and what will be added to the new stretch code.

Nate moves to add Stretch Code to 2024 Town Warrant Gail Seconds

Motion approved unanimously: Michael DeChiara, Aye; Gail Fleischaker, Aye; Isaac Goldstein, Aye; Nate Heard Aye.

Nate will find language (from DOER or Amherst town warrant) and send to Becky directly to get on to the next SB meeting agenda -Action Item

6:00 Climate Leaders Communities program CLC {Michael}

CLC is a Grant program, that was suggested to us by Chris Mason. The program supplies source of grant funding for a wide array of expenses, including studying and designing (initial phase costs – which can be a barrier to our access to future grants)

Requirements to qualify for the CLC program:

You must be a green community(which we are)

Have a local body on clean energy (which we do, the ECAC)

Develop a municipal decarbonization road map (operations and municipal building) by 2050 (this can be supported by the CLC program- once we apply to be a member of CLC by providing a letter of intent, they will provide a consultant to assist us with developing the decarbonization road map).

Adopt the Specialized Code +(which we are proposing to add to this year's Town Meeting Warrant)

Regarding the commitment to decarbonizing municipally owned building and infrastructure, Gail has started this process with the electricity use assessment of municipal buildings, though we would need to consider other energy usage like propane/natural gas)

We discussed a possible presentation to the SB after town meeting to pursue this option.

There was a concern that the ECAC would have little bandwidth to write these grants if we were to become eligible for more with the CLC Program. There was discussion of working with FRCOG in order to get grant writing support. There was a concern that FRCOG staff is spread pretty thin.

There was some momentum on using the Climate Leaders Community requirements as a roadmap for ECAC moving forward for the next year. In deeper discussion of the application requirements for the CLC we would need to write a letter confirming that we want to be a CLC within the next year. Would be assigned a consultant to develop the decarbonization roadmap Work with Chris Mason

What needs to be in the letter? What are we committing to? -Investigative action items

6:10 Minutes

Minutes for 1/9/24 Moved by Gail Seconded by Nate

Motion approved unanimously: Michael DeChiara, Aye; Gail Fleischaker, Aye; Isaac Goldstein, Aye; Nate Heard Aye.

Minutes for 2/6/24 Moved by Nate Seconded by Gail

Motion approved unanimously: Michael DeChiara, Aye; Gail Fleischaker, Aye; Isaac Goldstein, Aye; Nate Heard Aye.

Next Meeting Date: April 9th at 5:00pm

6:15 Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Isaac Seconded by Gail

Motion approved unanimously: Michael DeChiara, Aye; Gail Fleischaker, Aye; Isaac Goldstein, Aye; Nate Heard Aye.

Meeting Adjourned 6:21

Minutes respectfully submitted by Isaac Goldstein