

Energy and Climate Action Committee Meeting
Minutes – 7/30/2024
[approved 9/17/2024]

Virtual Meeting

Meeting Start: 5:00PM

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

Committee Members Absent: None

Public: Joseph Salvador joined the meeting to express concern about economic incentives being too in favor of all electric homes, which could cause problems when electricity services fail. Tight building envelopes also create challenges for air exchange.

Buildings Committee

Buildings Committee Chairman Stephen Dallmus joined the meeting to coordinate with ECAC and share information, including possible approaches for municipal building solar deployment.

Anything for which ECAC might advocate regarding energy efficiency or fossil fuel transition for municipal buildings would go through the Buildings Committee. The Buildings Committee is in the process of inspecting municipal buildings to better understand needs and to formulate a maintenance and update plan.

By the end of the summer, the Buildings Committee will have inspected all municipal buildings and have an idea of what needs to be addressed. Currently, increasing energy efficiency is not a Buildings Committee priority.

Energy efficiency steps need to take place before some additional decarbonization steps (heat pump installation) make sense. There is a lot of work to do to upgrade electrical systems. One thing the Buildings Committee might look into is LED lighting. ECAC isn't sure which state incentive programs (MassSave or other) are geared towards upgrades to municipal buildings.

Nate will circulate information about the state's new Green School Works program to ECAC.

Community Choice Aggregation Updates

The Select Board signed a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) contract between the Town of Shutesbury and Colonial Power Group. DPU has recently issued an order on municipal aggregation for the adoption of uniform guidelines that will speed approval of our CCA plan, including a 120-day limit turnaround for town CCA plans. Colonial Power Group suggested that Shutesbury wait until the CCA plan template is finalized before we move forward so that we can take advantage of the new DPU review and approval framework.

Climate Leader Program

Michael spoke with Alex from Ashfield, which passed at a single town meeting all required components for joining the Climate Leader Program.

- Opt-in Stretch code: Ashfield developed a general bylaw for Town Meeting approval

- Zero emission vehicle policy: while only requiring Select Board approval, Ashfield decided to adopt the policy as a general bylaw via Town Meeting
- Decarbonization commitment: Ashfield used a template suggested by Chris Mason, based on language used in Stockbridge and Acton (note: resolutions are none binding)
- Decarbonization roadmap: Importantly, a municipality doesn't need to have Climate Leader designation to apply for DOER support, in the form of a consultant, to develop its Decarbonization Roadmap so this step is independent of Town Meeting actions

DOER has templates and Ashfield simply adopted them. Michael walked the committee through the templates and available funding to obtain a consultant for the development of a Decarbonization Roadmap. We could go get a consultant now. The committee decided to finalize the templates and then schedule a public hearing. Michael will send out revised drafts.

Updates

Select Board approved changes to ECAC's charge, which now calls for five members.

Minutes

Isaac moved to approve the minutes from June 18. Nate seconded. Vote to approve minutes: Michael DeChiara, Aye; Gail Fleischaker, Aye; Nate Heard, Aye, Isaac Goldstein, Aye.

Close

Gail moved to adjourn the meeting; Nate seconded. Vote to adjourn: Michael DeChiara, Aye; Gail Fleischaker, Aye; Nate Heard, Aye, Isaac Goldstein, Aye.

Respectfully submitted, Nate Heard.