



**ENERGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING**

Monday, January 18, 2021 6:00 – 7:30 PM
Visitor Center, 14 North Street

*Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the City administration suggests citizens participate in this meeting by ZOOM.
Join the ZOOM Meeting online or by phone. (addresses and numbers given on website)*

Meeting began at 6:07 PM.

MINUTES

Approved 2/16/2021

I. Roll Call- where members are during the meeting, and if others are with them.

Present: Robin Hutchins, Reb MacKenzie, Erica Sweetser, and Derek Ferland.

Absent: Marilyn Harris, excused. David Lucier.

Vacant: Alternate Seat

Public: online guests, including Abigail Clay Kier, Eleanor Archibald, and Marcia Temple.

City Employees: Rebecca Vinduska, Zoom and Facebook coordinator; Nancy Merrill, Dir. Of Planning and Development; and Ed Morris, City Manager.

II. Approve minutes of Previous Meeting

A. Minutes of December 21, 2020 Meeting approved; Robin made a motion to accept; Derek 2nd; Roll Call: Robin, Reb, and Derek voted yea to accept the minutes; Erica abstained as she was absent last month.

a. Reb is taking minutes tonight.

III. Old Business/ Project Updates

A. Renewable Energy Ordinance

Nancy Merrill reported that the legal team, Christine Filmore of Drummond Woodsom (Leb.) and Huddy Grandy, are working with her on the Energy Ordinance. The Ordinance had to be reformatted because there was repetition in several parts of the ordinance. Nancy reviewed information on the ridgelines, which need to be identified in the Master Plan. She will speak with the Conservation Commission to further this work.

Nancy asked the lawyers to add three things in the evaluation that the State uses which could be helpful for the Planning Board. The GIS has a Viewsheds Tool on it, so when the Planning Board requests it, it could use these tools: 1) evaluation of the overall daytime and nighttime visual aspects of the facility; 2) the extent to which the

feature would be dominant within the viewshed; and 3) the effectiveness of the measures proposed to minimize or mitigate unreasonable adverse effects.

Energy Advisory Committee (EAC) would like to read it over before it goes to the Council and Nancy will email it to us for a final review. If EAC members have any questions or concerns, Nancy will bring it back to a meeting with EAC members.

B. Steel Mill Solar Project on Grissom Lane

The Solar Project has two agreements: 1) for two City lots of approx. 80 acres, and 2) with the Claremont Development Authority on a lot for 67 acres. The option agreement was signed in the fall of 2020 and they have until the fall of 2021 to renew it. It will expired in March of 2022. They have already filed some of their site work with the State and federal government for the project. It will be about six months, so they are ahead of schedule. If they elect to exercise their option, then the lease agreement starts. It's a twenty year lease with a couple of five year options. The terms on all the lots are the same. Rent is \$1000/acre/year and it escalates 2%/year. There is a PILOT of \$10,000/MW/year that escalates at 2%/year. There is a one time payment of \$175,000 for an Economic Development Fund. They will implement a stormwater management plan and install wildlife-friendly fencing, things that we were concerned about.

There will be a Power Purchase Agreement that is separate. Discussions about this have just begun. They need to know if the City is interested sometime this spring. This agreement will be finalized by December, 2021. The City is negotiating for 5 MW, and potentially more.

Derek: This is power that is available for local consumption, and not put up on the grid for points south.

Nancy: It would be for the City. There would be no net-metering involved. It would be a direct sale from the solar company to the City, or there might be a third party that would move it on their wires, but it would not cost anymore than that. The way they are working it is that we wouldn't have to deal with any of the State issues on net-metering.

This will be a 20 year agreement with as set price. What we are getting out of it is low cost renewable energy for the City, plus lease money, and PILOT money. It's close to \$5,000,000 for the City and another \$1,000,000 for the CDA, that they can pump into more projects.

It's still in its infancy. We'll have to make a decision in the spring. We'll probably have more information in the next 30 to 60 days

Derek: Is the PPA with just the municipality? Is it available to residential?

Nancy: I don't think 5 MW is going to meet the City's total need, so I think that is all up in the air. For now, it's the municipality.

Derek: You think the City will use all of that?

Nancy: I just started looking at those numbers today, so I can't answer that.

Derek: If there is any left over, maybe the school district could use it?

Nancy: Yes.

Derek: Have they shared what the possible rates will be?

Nancy: Not yet. But what is nice about it, prices in the world can always fluctuate, and they can fluctuate seasonally, and a 20 year agreement with a fixed price is pretty nice. We'll look at the pricing when they have that information for us.

Derek: I don't know when the City's current contract expires. The City, the County, and the School District are all on the same timetable with the same broker.

Nancy: It should all work about the same timeframe. The power would be available for the City the end of 2022. Our agreement runs from May, 2020 for 30 months. We'll be about the same timeframe.

Erica: Nancy, are you saying that it will decrease municipal energy costs while increasing revenue for the City?

Nancy: That's the hope. That's what we are trying to do. Obviously the revenue stream is important for Claremont. We hear about the tax rate all the time. One of the beauties of a tax stream on solar is that there is no expense. It's not like it uses City services so it's really money that would come in to support the community and we'd get some good green power out of it for a long period of time.

Reb: Nancy, I'm excited about this. This is excellent. I'm so glad to hear this update. Thank you so much.

Nancy: Sure. I'm sure that the company spokesperson could come talk to the EAC when we get some of these details.

Reb: I don't know how you're getting around the net-metering issue...

Nancy: It will be clever, but we're going to do it.

Derek: We're not producing it so we don't have to worry about the net-metering. We're just buying it.

Nancy: It can be bilateral with just the two parties directly. Or if that's a problem, he's already talking to suppliers to move it outside of the grid.

Derek: Do you want this committee's input on that PPA as it becomes clear? Or will the City just work it through the City staff? A second question would be, course we won't know until we get an Electric Aggregation Sub-committee formed, but down the road would it be possible to work in that solar site as part of our supplier for our electric aggregation project? Until we get a sub-committee, it's all a pipe dream, but...

Nancy: It can be done. It's one of the questions I've asked him. The customer can be who ever we want the customer to be.

Derek: The market forces will dictate that. If they can sell it in Connecticut for whatever cents per kilowatt more than they can get here then, obviously, they'll just put it up on the grid.

Nancy: They do have 10 MW already spoken for.

Derek: That's great! Are there any other questions?

Robin: Who is the "he" you are talking about?

Nancy: Steel Mill Solar Company is the one we have the lease with and Aaron Svedlow is the person we are working with.

In answer to your first question, we will probably work through the initial plan on the staff side and then bring it to the EAC to have you take a look at it and see if there

is something that we have missed or something that you would like to add before we take it to Council.

C. Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station Plan

Nancy states that there are several possible EV Charging Station locations identified in the City: the parking lot behind Pleasant Street on Broad Street has 2 possible charging stations and the parking garage, working with the tenants of the parking garage. There may be federal money coming out of Congress. The Planning and Development (P&D) staff are preparing for money by readying a couple EV charging station sites so when the money is available, they have projects ready to go. Scott Osgood is going to call the State to see if something has changed about the VW Settlement money for EV charging stations. Nancy is confused about how the private market will develop charging stations. Will everyone have a different price at their private station?

Derek: If federal dollars come, we need to be ready with projects planned. Conduit and power requirements need to be prepared ahead of time when ahead of planned construction projects. Nancy and Derek expressed a lack of understanding about the requirements for charging stations. (Universal plugs, etc.)

Nancy states that the Broad Street construction this spring will have power installed for a charging station, and North Street, by the sub-station and Visitor's Center may be a good place, too. Robin agrees that North Street would give people access to the Common Man Restaurant and downtown Claremont.

Reb: What about development on Washington Street near the businesses? Is it appropriate for the City to canvass the businesses to see if any have plans to put in EV charging stations? Can the City collaborate with businesses?

Nancy: We can certainly ask. There are EV charging stations by Purity Supreme in Lebanon, and I don't think that they put them in. But I'm not sure who did.

Reb: Can you throw out a question to the business community, like Cumbies, to say we are looking at expanding our EV charging station prospects and ask if entities in the City are looking at creating charging stations? If someone is putting multiple charging stations in a certain area, perhaps that would influence where the City may decide to develop charging stations.

Erica: Cumberland Farms wouldn't be a site because they want people to shop and pull out, but it would be good to have them near a hair salon, or a restaurant, where people go in as sit for an hour or two at a time. Probably not at a gas station.

Nancy: It would be more like a retail mall, to capture someone for a period of time. Demollis might entertain the idea.

Derek: We're going to talk about this later in our work plan discussion. Is there a gap right now that you need someone from the Committee to fill in to take on some of the leg work to make this "shovel ready" if money comes available for the projects.

Nancy: Since this is a new arena for us, and we're trying to figure out if we're funding it or if other funds come available, we would be quite happy with any information you could glean that would be helpful.

D. LED Lighting Project Recommendation (EAC)

Derek stated that at the last meeting, we said we should go ahead and jump on this until we heard Mike Davey's presentation on performance contracting. Mike suggested that we may want to bundle the LED lighting project with other projects where the payback isn't as good to make the total project have a better payback. Though the Council asked the EAC what to do, the City staff, however, would like us to support moving ahead with the lighting project now.

Nancy agreed and stated the lighting audit was done, the company has already submitted the application for the 50% grant from Eversource, and she felt the lighting project should go ahead.

Ed Morris joined us for this topic. He agreed with going ahead with the lighting project due to the 50% savings with which Eversource has agreed support the project. Though the lighting project hasn't been brought to the Council yet, they usually do, and it would be good to say that City staff have already discussed this with the EAC and that EAC recommends that the City move forward with the project. Ed states he understands the issue of bundling for better payback; however, he states that there are other projects in the City that can be bundled with more complicated projects with less payback that will make the bundled projects to make them feasible. He reiterated that he would like the EAC to recommend that the City staff go ahead with the lighting project now. It's on the agenda for the next Council meeting, so Ed would like the EAC's support to go ahead.

Thoughts of EAC members were to trust the staff's expertise on this, honor the work that has already been done to move the lighting project forward, the sooner the City can save energy and taxpayer money the better, and that there will be other projects that can be bundled later to provide similar benefits with performance contracting projects.

Roll call vote: Robin proposed the motion to move ahead with the lighting project; Erica seconded it. Robin, yea; Reb, yea; Erica, yea; and Derek, yea. Motion passed.

Ed left the Committee meeting.

Nancy mentioned that P&D staffing for our Committee will depend on what the expertise is in the office for the projects on which we are working. P&D staff will be working with the Committee on whatever we decide our goals are this year.

We expressed appreciation for Nancy attending our meeting and Nancy left.

E. 2021 Work Plan (EAC)

We elected to use the model of each focusing on the project of the work plan list that we feel most motivated to research and bring back information to the Committee instead of all focusing on the same project, one at a time. If the particular project needs more support than one person, drawing others on the Committee (or the public) may be necessary to move the project forward.

- a. Education and Outreach-** We agreed in the past that this is something that the whole Committee is committed to helping with. It will not fall on the shoulders of one or two people.

- b. EV Charging Stations-** Robin and Erica are interested in this project. Though Derek saw this as a finite project in identifying sites and where the electrical power will need to be brought to, Robin is more interested in developing more expertise, which identified by Nancy Merrill earlier, and will require research and time in the beginning. There was agreement that this project will not take all year; however, it is important that this research and collaboration with the City begin immediately due to the Pleasant Street Revitalization Project that is underway, breaking ground around April or May. Having this information for the City before ground is broken is the preference.

There is a larger vision of including area businesses in the planning of EV charging stations, too, requiring much more time and effort. We agreed that this is an upcoming issue and we want to be ahead of the push by consumers so it doesn't bypass us.

- c. Resilience/ Transition Towns-** Reb referenced the Energy Chapter in our Master Plan as the support for her interest in focusing on resilience, in which it is mentioned repeatedly. Though this is a primary interest to her, the City's focus on resilience is ongoing and varied through energy efficiency and transitions in energy sources. Other resilience goals are community building and skill building to increase community cohesiveness and abilities to cope and thrive which are especially needed in times of transition and crisis. Though the City continues to explore and adopt some types of resilience projects, similar to projects that Vital Communities promotes in energy efficiency, these kinds of projects are also important topics for our residents and ones that broaden and deepen resilience as they become incorporated in the fabric of the community, leading to a more cohesive and inclusive interdependence. She would like to see members of our community get involved in the parts of the resilience project that they want to promote.

Transition Towns, as listed in the appendix of our Energy Chapter, primarily focuses on building a healthy community while transitioning away from fossil fuels. There are many pieces of this transition from community building that includes all sectors of the community, creating walkable and bike-friendly infrastructure, increasing the use of public transportation, food security through increasing gardening and building local sources of agriculture- like CSAs, promoting locally-run businesses that provide the needs of the community, providing local healthcare, increase in local entertainment and recreational opportunities, etc. All these localization of resources and economy, and fostering competence help to build resilience and save energy and money that can be reinvested in the community. For more information on Transition Towns see TransitionUS.org and TransitionNetwork.org (founder and author Rob Hopkins).

Reb is encouraged to be more specific in identifying resilience projects and develop measurable outcomes, like SMART goals. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely) Erica mentioned that she would love to find a way to pull young people into our Committee work.

Reb is also interested in EV Charging Stations and the Electric Aggregation Sub-committee, which also have to do with resilience, but due to time constraints, can't be members of these sub-committees but will participate in these efforts as time allows.

Robin mentioned that she would like to learn more about Vital Communities and how we could incorporate some of their ongoing work in resilience into our own community goals. She will look into this, beginning with Sarah Brock. Robin would like there to be a more robust presence of Vital Communities in Claremont.

- d. Build a working relationship with CCTV, Josh Nelson-** We would like to further explore a more consistent and working relationship with Josh Nelson, new director of CCTV. Robin reported that Josh is requesting help to build more community engagement in programming. Reb will contact Josh to see if he would either like to come to the next meeting to talk about that or give us a list of things he would like to promote on CCTV. She will also ask Josh to put a PSA about Community Power and an invitation on CCTV for new members to join the Electric Aggregation Sub-committee and fill the vacancy in the Alternate Seat 2 of the EAC.
- e. Electric Aggregation Sub-committee-** We will form the sub-committee to track the bill in the legislature proposed by Eversource that could disable the goals of electric aggregation and kill the initiative for Community Power. Those who have expressed interest are Erica, Marilyn, and Robin will join if others will not. We still need two members of the community. Reb put an invitation on facebook today for members for both the sub-committee and the EAC's alternate seat that is vacant. She encouraged others on the EAC to do so, too.
- f. Solar Array at the Water Treatment Plant-** Would David Lucier like to take that on? Derek will ask him.
- g. Request for Qualifications for Performance Contracting-** bundling energy projects for the City to create a plan for accomplishing them over time that is efficient. Derek will take that on and solicit quotes from several energy contracting companies. Derek thinks that the City, School District, and the County may be able to enter into this together to create savings for each entity. He stated that Mike Davey was confident he could provide the best deal for us because he is local; however, we need to explore what other companies can offer, too. If it is too hard to create a collaboration between the City, Schools, and County, then each could adapt the RFQ to their own needs and press on.
- h. Process-** everyone will get 5-10 minutes to talk about their project at each meeting. The bylaws state that doing work outside the EAC can be problematic with the right-to-know statutes, so if we call our projects sub-committees, then we can talk with others on the sub-committees between meetings and bring our research and updates back to the EAC in our monthly meetings to report them.

A possible template for the reports may include:

- a vision for each project,

- SMART goals and objectives to achieve those goals, baselines- where possible,
- what has been accomplished in the last month to achieve those goals,
- self-evaluation for what went well and what needs to change, and
- what, if anything, the EAC and City can do to help with the success of the project.

Or, Sarah Brock's template may be a good one, too. Derek will look that up and send it out to us.

IV. New/Other Business

A. 2021-2023 Statewide Energy Efficiency Program- The statewide plan of NH utility companies is being reviewed by the PUC. It is in a holding pattern now.

Reb will ask Maurice Kreis about his thoughts on this. Scott Osgood's insights on legislative bills and other important information about policy development is missed on our Committee. Reb may right an article on this because energy efficiency is so important for our Committee to be helpful to the community about.

V. Future Business-

A. Summary of 2020 and Work Plan for 2021- Derek will write up a summary of what we did this past year and what we will be working on this year for the City Council to be approved at our next meeting. He will distribute this through deForest Bearse before the next meeting.

B. EAC Election of Officers- We will continue on with Derek as Chair and Robin as Vice Chair through 2021.

C. Report Template- Derek will send out any templates for organizing our reports to the EAC that he may find through our past work with Sarah Brock that may be helpful.

D. Project Reports- updates on our projects.

E. Other Emerging Topics- Time will be made when other topics need our attention.

VI. Public Input-

A. How can someone from the public participate in our meeting? Reb asks Rebecca Vinduska how this happens. Derek explains that though both Facebook and Zoom are live for our meeting, Facebook is only a means to watch the meeting. If someone wants to call in, they have to do that through the Zoom phone number or the virtual Zoom link. Rebecca V. supports what Derek said about the Zoom access number or link. We encourage public participation, but you may be asked to join the EAC.

B. Ad for New Members- Rebecca V. states that she will post the ad again for members to join the EAC.

VII. Adjourn-

Reb made the motion that we adjourn the meeting; Robin seconded it. Roll Call: Robin, yea; Reb, yea; Erica, yea; Derek, nay.

Meeting adjourns at 7:32 PM.