

Committee for Energy Efficiency and Sustainability (CEES)

Committee Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2023
6:00pm – 7:30pm
Community Room/GoToMeeting

Committee Members Present

- Peter Fromuth David Ertz Scott Sherriff Celine Kuhn
 Stephanie Watson Vacancy Bill Dunn Danielle Hood Megan Hellstedt
 Anna Siegel (SL) Heather Abbott (TC)
 Scott LaFlamme (Staff) Meddy Smith (Staff)

Public in Attendance:

APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER , 13, MEETING MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes tabled without a quorum.

ONGOING PROJECT UPDATES

Climate Action Planning

Meddy and Megan reported on the Community Workshop and next steps of the climate plan, including refining actions to bring to town staff for review. The group discussed the value of creating a framework to evaluate and prioritize potential actions based on their GHG reduction potential with other factors, including community priority and resilience benefits. Being transparent with the implementation horizon of this plan will be important, and YCAT can consider laying out the plan implementation matrix in such a way to highlight the immediate or highest-impact next steps to guide implementation.

The group also discussed what recommendation could be made in the plan for identifying a structure for implementation. At this point it is understood that CEES, as permanent town committee, would facilitate implementation. Further conversation will be had about recommended staff capacity needs, amended charter to CEES, or additional members. The group noted the value of building in accountability and transparent progress tracking across town committees and staff for successful implementation. One idea to this end could be to suggest biannual progress reports to Council delivered by the various action champions (not just CEES) to encourage wider investment in CAP implementation.

Sligo Road Solar

David Ertz gave an update on the effort to create a solar array at Town property on Sligo Road. Currently, the project team is waiting to hear back from the developer but the project may have to be abandoned due to timing challenges in completing required studies with ISO New England for a 2024 deadline. The project team explored reducing the size of the proposed array from 1.9mW to 1mW. It was noted the same challenges would be expected at any other potential location in town, due to the nature of restrictions at this time.

- *Action Item(s)*: David will provide updates to the group in the next meeting.

Efficiency Yarmouth



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Project team is moving ahead with finishing the application and program materials, in addition to outreach, following review from stakeholders. Next steps will be engaging vendors to advertise the program and supporting community resource organizations to facilitate applicants through the process as needed.

School Research

Megan reported on fruitful conversations with School Superintendent Dolloff on opportunities to reduce emissions from the school system. Danielle has connected with a member at TRANE, an engineering firm that works with all scales of facilities to decarbonize buildings and she received useful background on their process. Next steps include keeping the conversation moving with the school and potentially connecting Dr. Dolloff to this contact for information gathering, noting that to move ahead with any baselining for school energy systems they would go out to bid.

- *Action Item(s)*: Meddy and Megan make this connection

ENERGY ADVOCACY

Anna brought forward a conversation with the group about CEES moving to bring Town Council a request for them to endorse Pine Tree Power (PTP) ahead of the upcoming referendum. The group discussed what would be needed make this case, including a clear understanding of how PTP would be able to facilitate Yarmouth's climate goals or the Climate Action Plan, or how current utility would be detrimental to achieving the towns goals. The potential benefits of PTP as discussed include a more reliable distribution grid and more long-term planning and investment in energy resilience across the State. Bill noted that PTP could help facilitate the Climate Plan actions as they relate to accelerating electrification of homes and vehicles, in that reliability and resilience of the distribution system will be critical to ensuring a smooth transition to electrification.

The group noted the complexity of the issue, the short turnaround time to the referendum, and some members felt there may not be resources or information necessary to make a data-driven case to Council. The group noted that there is not much precedent for Council endorsing referendum items, and at the meeting there was not a quorum of CEES members to vote to move this ahead. The group also discussed the possibility of providing an informational session to Council or residents on this topic.

- *Action item(s)*: Anna to send group Bar Harbor materials for their council consideration as reference, other CEES members free to share thoughts to the whole group via email

ADJOURN

The Committee adjourned upon mutual consent at 7:36 pm