

COMPREHENSIVE SUSTAINABILITY & ENERGY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 13, 2022

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Comprehensive Sustainability & Energy Committee was held on January 13, 2022 at 7:00 pm via Zoom. CSEC members present were Jerry Frenkil (Chair), Karen Gibson (Clerk), Sharon Jones, Janet Miller, Bob Shatten, and Hany Teylouni. Also present were Brad Hubbard-Nelson, Amanda Kohn (Sustainability Director), Matt Johnson (Select Board), and Eric Reinhard, Laura Davis.

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Jerry called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

2. Approval of minutes from December 16th

Karen noted minor corrections she received to the minutes. Janet moved to approve the minutes as amended. Hany seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

3. Chair's Update

Jerry reported on progress for the Concord Middle School (CMS) PV. He noted concerns had been raised regarding the projected cost figures presented from CMLP. The next step will be the design and financing assessment. The design will then go out to bid for construction. If CMLP proposes that they own the arrays and that it be financed through a bond offering, the bond offering might not be approved. If set up as a PPA, this is within aegis of CMLP and would not have to go to a vote. Matt Johnson said that CMS has committed to a building a net zero school, and the Light Board has made a commitment to provide solar. There are many options related to ownership, management, funding that still need to be worked out. The push for the net zero school with solar PV is in keeping with the Town's sustainability plan calling for 20 MW of solar generation by 2030, and is being driven by the Town meeting vote.

Jerry reported speaking with Jan Aceti who asked about the efficiency between induction cooking vs electric conduction cooking. Brad responded there is a lot of efficiency within the house—use of induction stoves may lower GHGs, but this depends on where electricity is coming from. Sharon offered to contact Jan Aceti and follow up with a response. Matt read a study that concluded that conduction and induction have same efficiency, but the size of the burner has to match the size of the pot. He will find document and circulate it. Janet said the difference is the induction heats pan and food, but not cooktop—another benefit of induction – less wasted heat.

4. Director's Update

Amanda reported she sent around the Director's update and would like feedback from CSEC members. She will post on CAAB's website. If the public is looking for an update, they can find it there. She will send her report to CSEC members prior to meetings, and will bring highlights to the meetings.

She expressed sadness that Brad has stepped down from CSEC, but encouraged CSEC members to have interested people to apply—for either CSEC or CAAB. Jerry recognized Brad's long service to CSEC and the Town, and thanked him for his efforts.

5. Sustainability Series

Jerry gave a brief update on the series, including a description and the tentative event list. The EV Working group is interested in doing a workshop with CSEC. The Library would like to work with CSEC on a native seedling event. Mothers Out Front is interested in learning about heat pumps. Brad mentioned that his group, Heat Smart, could organize a community presentation for Mothers Out Front. The Heat Smart Alliance has its monthly meeting tomorrow at 7:30am.

Janet gave an update on the Keynote address. Prof. Kerry Emanuel has agreed to do a webinar with Q&A on April 13 at 7pm. By this time next month, we should have title and an abstract. Jerry suggested Janet ask if April 27—after school vacation—also works. Amanda offered to include some interactive online aspects, such as polls, Google Jam Board, Word Cloud.

Brad presented his idea for a World Café type workshop (in person, or zoom) on the heels of the Keynote address—with breakout sessions for deep listening and focusing on specific motivational questions; then a wrap-up. Target date is April 27. Brad would like a person or two from CSEC to help out. Brad will send the proposal to CSEC members.

Brad presented the Cooler Concord Climate Challenge and teams, and suggested using the keynote to inspire people to sign up for the Climate Challenge.

Laura Davis expressed interested in collaboration broadly on sustainability series. She asked if CSEC had considered something that would be more family friendly than online webinars. They would be interested in collaborating on an outdoor event – sustainability fair for example – and bringing in a lot of groups. Jerry and Laura will speak offline to explore possibilities.

Jerry presented the idea for the “Your Sustainable Home Now” event. He and Doug spoke with Reni at the Library. They are interested in collaborating and can be flexible on dates—likely to be a virtual event. CSEC needs to update the existing presentation materials, which provide a good introduction to the things people can do in their own homes.

Jerry presented the Sustainability for Concord Businesses effort. Michael has reached out to Concord Business Partnership. They are interested in hearing from CSEC. There will be a premeeting next week. Amanda will attend the Feb 2 meeting to introduce Concord Sustainability. Jerry pointed out that if this doesn't fit into the series, we shouldn't force it there, but should pursue opening channels of communication and brainstorming what we can do together.

Janet presented the idea to collaborate with the EV working group on an event. There may be cars available for a ride and drive event in the fall. The EV working group suggested an event covering charging and tips on winter driving, walking people through trip planning and various available apps; and a possible virtual bingo game. Amanda suggested using the bingo card to keep people engaged beyond the event; e.g. the "EV in the wild" initiative (photos of EVs with notable places in Concord). Next step is to flesh out details and decide a title by mid-February. Janet will take the lead. June would be a good time for this charging event.

Jerry presented the Library's event, "Plant a Native Seedling", that they would like to collaborate with CSEC on. They will help promote CSEC events. This event would be run by the Library, but CSEC could provide additional information for those people picking up trees—additional climate action perspectives. Amanda noted that one of the sustainability goals is to become a tree city that celebrates Arbor Day. Concord hasn't declared its Arbor Day yet. There are a lot of other events on April 29 and because this will be a big draw, is it a way to draw in people to the Climate Challenge? We would have to use "Arbor Day" in promoting this event in order to take credit for it as part of Concord becoming a tree city.

Hany talked about promoting the Sustainability Series using the Cooler Concord website. He suggested using the URL and/or QR code to access the events on the site for the sustainability series on the website. Event registration will be through the Cooler Concord website. We will be able to track where registrations are coming from through Google Analytics. Anything sent out electronically, should include a link to this site.

6. Annual Report

Janet drafted and Jerry edited a first draft of a 2021 Annual Report for CSEC. There was discussion about the number of EVs and homes that have had heat pumps installed.

Eric Reinhard, Mill Circle, Concord, asked if it would be appropriate to quote how much leverage money was available to from the Town. Amanda suggested adding something about working with Concord Heats Electric, and suggested that CSEC add "Check out Cooler Concord website for events in 2022". The deadline is next week.

7. CSEC statement for Special Town Meeting

Jerry presented a statement on the PV for CMS for Town Meeting and asked if CSEC members all agreed with the statement. If there is a discussion about PV at CMS during Town meeting, Jerry will make this comment on behalf of CSEC. CSEC members agreed. Brad noted that there is a document being drafted by Charlie Parker encouraging CMLP to have a plan to get to the goal of 20MW of solar generation that CSEC should be aware of.

8. Liaison reports

CSEC members did not have anything to add to the earlier discussion.

9. Public Comment

Laura Davis, 330 Garfield Rd, Concord suggested adding a sentence or two about where we are and how we got there with regard to Town Meeting. There may be confusion about what we are voting on. She suggested along the lines of “Today at Town meeting we are voting on a net zero school that will replace two fossil burning schools. Later there will be a separate vote on solar/PV to be added to the school.”

Eric Reinhard expressed excitement for the sustainability series and Kerry Emanuel’s keynote address especially.

10. Adjourn

Karen moved to adjourn. Sharon seconded. The committee adjourned at 9:02pm.