

COMPREHENSIVE SUSTAINABILITY & ENERGY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 21, 2021

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Comprehensive Sustainability & Energy Committee was held on January 21, 2021 at 3:30pm via Zoom. CSEC members present were Douglas Sharpe (chair), Jerry Frenkil, Julie Kleyn (clerk), Janet Miller, Brad Hubbard-Nelson, Sharon Jones, Karen Gibson, Hani Teylouni and Bob Shatten. Also present were Brian Foulds, Ethan Herberman, Geoff Tritsch, Travis Estes, Jan Aceti, Kristen Ferguson, Jane Hotchkiss, Dean Banfield and Gilda Gussin.

1. Welcome

- Doug welcomed visitors: Brian Foulds, Ethan Herberman, Geoff Tritsch, Travis Estes, Jan Aceti, Kristen Ferguson, Jane Hotchkiss, Dean Banfield and Gilda Gussin.

2. Approval of December 17, 2020 minutes

- Janet, Sharon and Brad proposed some corrections. They will send these to Karen who took the minutes.
- Brad clarified the process of commenting on/editing minutes. They cannot be in a shared document as this is contrary to open meeting law. Julie confirmed this by reading out a brief email from Kate Hanley. Going forward, all comments must be submitted privately to the person taking the minutes in order to be incorporated.
- Doug motioned to approve the December 17 minutes as amended, Brad seconded. All approved.

3. Next meeting & announcements

- All agreed to next meeting: February 18, 3:30-5:30pm
- Brad shared that last week's "Zero Carbon Home" webinar with David Green (sponsored by FP Environmental Team and ConcordCAN) will be repeated Tuesday Jan 26. David showed how investing in weatherization (insulation, windows, air sealing), heat pumps and solar PV can get home to zero carbon at a good return on investment.

4. ASHP awareness and quality control program presentation (Jan Aceti and others)

- Jan introduced Ethan Herberman and Geoff Tritsch (employees of Abode), the new heating and cooling coaches, who will be working with CMLP on CMLP's new *Concord Clean Comfort* Program, branded by Energy New England.
- Jan shared the new *Concord Clean Comfort* program brochure via screen-share (the program is funded by CMLP and a grant)
 - increase adoption of heat pumps
 - emphasize importance of contacting a coach as first step
 - help residents navigate heating/cooling system sizing and performance questions (oversizing heat pumps is an issue).
- CMLP is working on marketing the coaching service as well as the program itself
- Abode will have a list of participating contractors (work in progress). Residents do not have to use a participating contractor to get a rebate (CMLP). Preapproval required before systems are installed.
- Additional promotion for the program will be on the Town's sustainability page.
- Ethan and Geoff introduced themselves and shared (verbally) their professional bios.
- Ethan and Geoff are currently receiving technical training for coaching. They will commence coaching in February.
- Travis presented the broader picture of the program which is currently working through 6 MLPs across MA and has engaged with 200 residents to date
- Travis stressed the importance of coaching and mentorship to help people navigate the complicated subject of clean heating/cooling, especially the quashing of popular myths about heat pumps (do not work at low temperatures etc). The goal is to make the process as seamless and easy as possible for customers.
- Abode will work with contractors to build key data.
- Julie asked how this syncs with the work Brad and others are doing with the HeatSmart Alliance and MassEnergize. Jan responded that she is collaborating with Brad to create tools for coaches. Jan asked how best can CMLP and Abode work with and complement the work of the HeatSmart Alliance. She suggested the possibility of sharing marketing materials.
- Doug asked whether data collection from Abode can be shared with the HeatSmart Alliance. Jan said customer testimonials can be made public and shared.
- Brad asked whether the *Clean Comfort* program will allow prospective customers to see how system costs average for different contractors, as a useful MassCEC webpage does. (<https://www.masscec.com/cost-residential-air-source-heat-pumps>).
- Travis responded that there is no tool for this yet, and specific contractor costs may not be shared because CMLP cannot specifically recommend a particular contractor. However, they can and will help residents understand quotes and provide guidance and advice.
- Hany asked if the program was concerned only with heat and Travis replied that it would be heating and cooling and that Abode's overarching message is for customers to think about total electrification of their homes.

- Travis also stressed that driving community change cannot be done with one organization/program alone, so Abode/CMLP hopes to liaise closely with the HeatSmart Alliance and MassEnergize as they share the common goal of working to educate and convert the community to heat pumps and electrification.
- Doug asked whether the assessor's database, which has information on the different types of fuel residents have, can be used for identifying prospective customers. Travis responded that the reliability and accuracy of this data base cannot be trusted. But could be a parallel path.
- Gilda expressed her support for the *Clean Comfort* program and asked what the target number of households is. Jan replied that the program is committed to coaching 150 households.
- Gilda asked Travis how successful other MLPs have been with the *Clean Comfort* program thus far. Travis said it's been mixed, but community communication is key and he is optimistic that Concord can achieve this and make the program a success.

5. Planning Board Liaison update (Karen)

Karen reported on a portion of the January 12th Planning Board meeting.

- Gary Kleiman, one of the members of the RMI building electrification accelerator group, spoke about things Concord can do that don't preempt state law, and specifically on some green zoning related options.
- One suggestion was adopting a formal definition of what a net-zero building is, and thinking about metrics and what should be measured. Incentives can also be offered for development, but he cautioned that these should be well thought out to avoid unintended consequences.
- Jerry noted that there are already a number of definitions of net-zero that would be useful in the process.
- Kristen Ferguson (Planning Board) said the Planning Board would like to work with CSEC on a net-zero definition for homes. This project will be longer term and Haley Orvedal will spearhead this.
- Work continues on the Thoreau Business District Redevelopment plan-ensuring this is more walkable, mixed use, and sustainable.
- The Board is also looking for ways to strengthen bylaws in order to be more in line with the Town's long range sustainability plan. For example, they are considering asking applicants to demonstrate the cost difference between all-electric and a building with fossil fuels.

6. CMLP liaison update (Jerry)

- Jerry said CMLP recently did a retrospective study on how effective their heat pump program has been to date and the study shows it is falling short of

targets. CMLP is not giving out as many rebates as it should be and numbers have declined over the years.

- Alice Kaufman, chair of the CMLP Board, commented to the board that "We are really only nibbling at the edges of the problem right now. We need to be more aggressive to reach scale" referring to CMLP's efforts to decarbonize.
- CMLP is currently working on updating their strategic plan
- Doug said that the push to town-wide electrification is only as good as CMLP's ability to deliver and source non-fossil fuel powered electricity. Jerry said this is being actively discussed at CMLP and CMLP is aware it needs to clean up its portfolio.

7. MassEnergize update (Brad)

- The Cooler Concord site has now been updated with new Actions and Events.
- Use it to find out about solar, EVs, heat pumps, best town resources etc
- A newsletter was recently sent out to the Cooler Concord MailChimp list.
- Brad urged CSEC members to visit the site which is very Concord-specific and provide profiles and testimonials.
- A student intern from CCHS will soon start a 6-week software development project for MassEnergize.

8. HeatSmart Alliance update (Brad)

- The HSA now has HEET (Home Energy Efficiency Team) as a fiscal sponsor, now the Alliance can apply for grants and receive donations
- Brad is now HSA treasurer and Hany is also involved, currently doing coach training through Abode
- Soon will be considering what projects to undertake and how
- Brad said Jan's coaching program has been great, and the HSA aims to use it to get coaches in many more towns. Concord is the gold standard, a lot of other towns will use Concord as their model.
- New website for HSA is in progress (Steve Breit from Wayland).

9. EV update (Janet)

- Not much to report. The multi-unit dwelling program is progressing slowly.
- Brian said the new promotion -- CONCORD DRIVES ELECTRIC magnets and decals -- is launching today. Email a request to ev@ene.org to get magnets and decals to promote EVs.

10. CAAB liaison update (Doug)

- No meeting last night. Next meeting is next Wednesday. Doug hopes to attend.

11. CSEC strategy going forward

- With Gilda, Sharon and Mike McAteer, Brad is working on a new document to improve adoption of clean home heating systems among Concord residents (working title “Concord Heats Electric”).
- Purpose: make best use of existing good things (CMLP rebates, Abode arrangement, ENE Audits), improve on them and fill in the gaps
- A 5-year pilot program aiming to reach 250 homes per year for conversion, starting with oil/propane/electric heat
- Actionable energy plan for homeowners with periodic follow-ups
- Short document: [Concord Heats Electric - Components](#)
 - Breaking down the program into sub-projects which could be handled by different people.
- Could consider ways we might use the CCHS Prifti Day of Service (early May) to reach out to homeowners or other purpose.
- Brad shared a document with CSEC. He said we need to be targeting a lot more homes, be more ambitious and aggressive.
- Brad said there are a lot of barriers:
 - Home owners are not familiar with these systems,
 - It’s expensive,
 - It’s hard to reach home owners at the right moment (when their old fossil fuel systems die or need repairs and they’re ready to switch to a new system).
- Need to design an outreach campaign, working through schools and community groups.
- Look at big picture/economics...residents must consider whether it makes sense to install solar at the same time as a heat pump. Leading with a home’s energy efficiency score motivates residents.
- Gilda said we need to be at 30% of households reached. She asked what if we encouraged home owners to get a whole home energy audit? And this audit should be good for several years so that in the event their heating system failed, they would be ready to take action because they would have received all the information.
- Home electrification data base could be really useful, separate from the Assessors database.
- Question is: should we revisit rebate levels and compare to other programs?
- Low interest financing is a missing piece. Financing can be a big impediment.
- Grant funding opportunity could be a good match from MassCEC. “Decarbonization Pathways” program
- Brad wants CSEC to raise its level of ambition.

12. Discussion of further development of heat pump installation case studies

- Brad met with Kate after last meeting and wrote a short [intro](#)

- Doug shared Kate Hanley's case study outline including base information about each house (style, size, shape etc) and plans for the transition from fossil fuels to electricity.
- Doug shared his own experience of installing a heat pump.
- Doug asked how CSEC would work on this? Write case studies based on their own experience? Should CSEC members conduct interviews using Kate's outline in order to create case studies?
- Jerry said this could be challenging because of covid-19 and the need for the interviewer to visit the house. Brad said not necessary to visit the house.
- The case studies book is an online book not a physical book. It will be on the Town's sustainability page.
- Sharon worked with Kate H to create a case study. Sharon said Kate did a great job.
- Jan pointed out that all these elements must connect on the Town's sustainability page...the *Clean Comfort* link with the case studies online book and testimonials.
- Ethan suggested asking homeowners to take a short video of their heat pump installation to add to case study and share with residents.
- It was suggested too that case studies be searchable by house type or size, so interested parties can search case studies according to their own house specs. Keyword search.
- Sharon thinks we should move away from talking about "payback time", that it's important to stress the incentive of the greater good. Individual investment may not pay back over the time you live in your home, but it adds value to the home and to the decarbonization goals of the wider community. But she added that she is saving around \$1200 a year through electrification actions she has taken in her own home.
- Doug said partial electrification in a home is valid too. Hany agreed that the hybrid model is important.

13. Discussion about CSEC annual report

- Due Jan 29th.
- Arrange draft review.
- Doug asked for feedback and Brad said he will help

14. Questions and public comments

- Geoff said he would be happy to be a source for the heat pump case study

15. Adjourn

- Doug moved to adjourn at 5:34pm. Brad seconded. All approved.