

# COMPREHENSIVE SUSTAINABILITY & ENERGY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, May 20, 2021

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Comprehensive Sustainability & Energy Committee was held on May 20, 2021 at 3:30 pm via Zoom. CSEC members present were Douglas Sharpe (chair), Jerry Frenkil, Julie Kleyn (clerk), Janet Miller, Brad Hubbard-Nelson, Sharon Jones, Hany Teylouni, and Karen Gibson. Also present were Jake Swenson and Gilda Gussin.

## 1. Welcome & Announcements

- Doug welcomed visitors: Jake Swenson (chair of CAAB - Climate Action Advisory Board) and Gilda Gussin.
- Next meeting will be hosted by new chair, Jerry Frenkil, and new clerk, Karen Gibson.

## 2. Approval of Minutes from April 15th Meeting

- Janet moved to approve the April 15 minutes as amended by Julie, Brad seconded, all approved.

## 3. Next Meeting Dates:

- Thursday June 17th, 3:30 - 5:30 pm
- Thursday, July 15th, 3:30 - 5:30 pm
- Sharon asked whether CSEC meetings would continue to be on Zoom; Doug concurred. Janet added that the State stipulates that meetings cannot be in person yet.

## 4. Overview of Article 31 (Jake Swenson)

- Jake shared CAAB's presentation for Town Meeting (1pm, June 13<sup>th</sup>).
- 2-part process:
  - I: getting legislative approval of the bylaw
  - II: implementing the bylaw
- Article 31 wraps both together, supporting Concord's 2050 climate goals and sustainability roadmap by prohibiting all fossil fuel in new construction.
- Urgent action needed by residents to support CMLP's efforts to move towards renewable energy.

- Even if we had 100% renewable electricity, Concord’s overall emissions would be down only by one third at the current rate. This is falling far short of our goals.
- Action is needed across all fields (transport, buildings, agriculture etc.), but biggest sector is buildings.
- Many asked about the rate of new construction. Brad said approximately 30 homes per year. Mandating fossil-free new construction is just one piece of the challenge.
- Jake shared that, based on Rocky Mountain Institute research, new homes built with heat pumps now have lower upfront costs.
- Doug asked whether the definition of new construction includes retrofitting if on sufficiently large scale. Jake replied that the bylaw is based solely on new construction.
- Jake listed the exemptions to the bylaw.
- No special exemption for hot water heaters.
- Jake confirmed that, if CSEC supports adoption of Art 31, it would be both parts, getting legislative approval of the bylaw and implementing it.
- Three other MA towns, including Brookline and Arlington, have passed legislation similar to Article 31 and about nine other towns have this process in the works. It is critical that many communities join together to put pressure on the State for approval.
- The Article needs to pass by 50%.
- The article is now a 2-step process because the State denied Brookline’s bylaw petition a year ago.

## **5. Further support of Article 31 - Home Rule Legislation & Bylaw Amendment Regulation of Fossil Fuel Infrastructure, Review Support Letter (Gilda Gussin)**

- Janet has drafted a letter to the Concord Journal in response to a request by Gilda Gussin. CSEC reviewed this letter which Janet had also shared with the committee via email.
- Brad proposed that CSEC support Article 31, Janet seconded, all approved.
- Jerry moved to approve the draft letter to the Concord Journal, Sharon seconded, all approved.
- Janet will submit this May 21, and copy the Town Meeting Moderator.
- The Concord Select Board, CMLP, Mothers Out Front, and CAAB are all supporting Article 31, also.
- Janet said it’s essential that we help get the word out and answer residents’ questions about the article/bylaw in order to garner support.
- Gilda asked that everyone go to the [website](#) and say yes to pledge 31.
- Upcoming community “actionars” re Article 31:
  - Sun, May 23 | 5:00 - 5:30 pm
  - Wed, May 26 | 12:00 - 12:30 pm
- Register on [www.carbonfreeconcord.org](http://www.carbonfreeconcord.org)

## **6. Electric Homes Case Study Updates + Planning (Doug)**

- Doug shared the spreadsheet of the status of case studies
- Doug checked in with all CSEC members who had a YES by their name (meaning they are responsible for a case study submission).
- Hany and Doug feel the case studies are not highly visible on the Town's website, hard to find.
- Janet said we should all be promoting this page, via social media, our email lists etc.
- Julie suggested a newsletter, and Sharon proposed bill inserts (with Kate and Jan Aceti's involvement) Brad said we could post on NextDoor supporting article 31 and highlight case studies there.
- Hany said he would write a case study for himself because he is about to install a heat pump.

## **7. Concord Goes Electric event update (Brad)**

- The event has been postponed until September (date to be determined).
- Brad updated the group on recent talks with Gilda, Jan Aceti, and Kate Hanley.
- Abode Energy Management is doing coaching and approval services. Jan thinks they are working on full decarbonization estimates, which could possibly replace the current energy assessments.
- Doug asked whether there are rebates available at present. Sharon said there is a good GSHP (ground source heat pump) rebate. Also, alternative energy credits for whole home heat pump systems.
- Julie said if we send out a newsletter guiding people to case studies, we could add boxed text about current rebates/tax credits today.

## **8. EV working group (Janet)**

- Nothing to report.

## **9. Liaison updates**

- CMLP: Jerry said he was briefed on the recent CMLP meeting after it occurred and that there is a discussion about a hydro PPA. ENE is promoting an opportunity to do a new PPA with a New York provider. The energy cost is very low but capacity costs are expensive. No decision has been made yet.
- Brad asked for clarity on capacity. Energy cost is per KW basis. Capacity cost is a payment to ensure that energy is there when you call for it. (Power supply, not energy source.)
- AMI metering and how to manage low use and peak usage times was also discussed but not much progress.

- Hany asked if there was any update on the CMS building project. Jerry said Kate will work with Dave Wood at CMLP for making the building net zero (not just net zero ready).
- The CMS Building Committee has said that it is CMLP's responsibility to make the new building net zero. CMLP would be responsible for all maintenance and operating of net zero systems. Jerry wants the CMS Building Committee to make a stronger commitment to net zero. CMS will be fossil fuel free, Jerry said, but plans do not include energy generation and that is require in order to achieve net zero.

#### **10. Review of other Town Meeting articles pertaining to sustainability (Janet)**

- Article 35, Tree Preservation By-Law
- Article 39, Earth Removal
- Article 40, Neonicotinoid Prohibition
- Janet said CSEC members should be aware of and familiar with these articles.

#### **11. Public Comment**

- Sharon said Bill Gates published recently a book about climate change: How to Avoid a Climate Disaster. She highly recommended it. Janet shared a book she had just started: The New Climate War, by climate scientist Michael Mann.
- Jerry shared an interesting recent announcement from Ford Motors...the all-electric new F150 pick-up truck - by far the highest selling car in the US -- is better than its gas predecessor which Jerry said is very important because this will appeal to those seeking the best pick-up truck even if they are not motivated by the energy argument.
- Hany said availability of charging stations will be the biggest challenge.

#### **12. Adjourn**

- The committee adjourned at 5:38 pm.
- Brad thanked Doug for chairing CSEC for 2 years and Doug thanked Julie for being clerk.