



Energy & Sustainability Committee
Thursday, March 16, 2023
7:00 p.m.
Remote Meeting – Minutes

Attendees:

Robert Dorer, Chair
John Shutkin
Dan Bostwick, Recorded Minutes
Christine Rabinowitz
Margot Fleischman
Emily Prince
Patricia Fabian
Chris Gittins (Planning Board liaison)
Taissir Alani (Facilities Dept Liaison)

Members of the public:

Alan Oslan
Brendan Welch
Carol Kelly
Erin Dorr
Jane Mosier
Karen Willson
Marcia Bushnell
Marilou Barsam
Nancy Asbedian
Rebecca Pomerantz
Renu Bostwick
Robin Weston
Sue Swanson

Robert called the meeting to order at 7:03pm and read the Governor’s Order on meeting remote participation.

1. Public Comment – up to 3 minutes per commenter

Sue Swanson, 45 Shawsheen Rd Unit 32, active member of Mothers Out Front, but speaking for herself. At a recent Mothers Out Front state meeting where they were talking about many



other towns that have sustainability staff. Sue is concerned that Bedford's position hasn't been filled. Sue hopes that the position will not be downsized and will work with the entire community, especially the commercial sector which accounts for 75% of building emissions in Bedford.

2. Schedule for Meeting Minutes Scribes Rotation and January 19, 2023 and February 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes - review and approval

Jan 19, 2023 minutes:

Christine's concern with the minutes has been resolved.

Christine moved the minutes be approved as presented, John seconded

Vote: Approved 6-0-0

Feb 16, 2023 minutes:

Dan moved the minutes be approved as presented, Christine seconded

Vote: Approved 6-0-0

3. Energy & Sustainability Manager – status update

The Town Manager was unable to attend this meeting due to other commitments.

Emily has an update. Spoke with Town Manager Sarah Stanton yesterday – she's committed to hiring the position. Bedford's understaffed HR dept, and a generally tough job market for municipal positions are challenges for filling the position. The Town HR dept is one person who handles all town and school employees and retirees.

Emily forwarded the job description to members of the Net Zero Advisory Council to share with their networks. No applicants that are qualified have applied.

Robert reiterated the committee's concerns about getting the word out via LinkedIn and Indeed.com. Emily reported that there are costs associated with posting on LinkedIn and Indeed.com and the Town has exceeded its budget for wrt the Energy & Sustainability Manager position.

Christine reached out to Ken Pruitt and Jillian Martin-Wilson who are Winchester's and Natick's sustainability directors. Mr. Pruitt sent the job description out to 75 of his colleagues. Ms. Martin-Wilson asked why GIS experience is preferred and noted that may be restricting the number of applicants.

Bob is concerned that the Town will be able to react quickly to a qualified candidate due to lack of HR staff.

Margot says that the Selectboard is interested in getting the position filled and noted that municipal hiring is a challenge across the state.



Christine noted that the annual town meeting warrant calls the position “Energy Manager” and changed the pay grade. Margot said the pay grade is consistent with the job description and double checked that the position is still “Energy and Sustainability Manager”.

4. Town Meeting Warrant Review for Potential ESC Endorsement(s)

a. Article 22 – Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Two Family Dwellings

Chris Gittins provided a summary on article 22, proposed amendments to zoning bylaws wrt 2-family housing. The article would lower barriers to converting a single family to two family homes. From an energy standpoint, it allows increased density which generally reduces per household energy use. The proposed article would also reduce pressure to develop undeveloped land.

Christine had a couple of questions about the article

- What square footage does the FAR apply to, that which can be added for the second unit or the total? Chris: both units are limited to 15% of conforming sized lot or 3000 square foot maximum.
- Section 4.2.2.1 is about parking and says there must be a parking screen. What is a parking screen? Chris: will investigate and reply offline.

Dan moved the ESC endorse Article 22 as its passage will help with Bedford’s energy and sustainability goals, Patricia seconded.

Vote: Approved: 7-0-0.

Dan will speak at town meeting. Emily will be a backup.

b. Other articles or major budget items related to ESC charge?

No other items on the Warrant were discussed

5. Ongoing Status Updates:

a. DOER Stretch Code and Building Energy Use Disclosure Bylaw

The March MAGIC meeting shifted agendas and didn’t cover the stretch code. The April meeting is expected to cover the stretch code.

Emily sent a letter to the Bedford Citizen about building all-electric homes that are being constructed in Bedford but hasn’t heard back.

b. Composting – individual, schools, and Recycling Center pilot project

Black Earth – 352 subscribers in Town. 4 more than last month

Drop off site – 31 households



Chris met with Erin Dorr, Emily and Ken Whittier (school meal program coordinator) about composting in schools. Schools lack staff to implement a food waste reduction program in the cafeterias. Erin has been working on getting the school stakeholders on board. There's a meeting upcoming with Erin, Liz Antanavica (DPW Recycling Coordinator), and Emily at JGMS to talk about a pilot for cafeteria composting. Erin has visited the schools in Acton and observed that the kids know how to do it. Taissir says everyone is on board, including the superintendent, but staffing is the concern – they want to see it succeed in the long term.

c. Anti-Idling - school collaboration

Bob asked where there are official no-idling signs. Taissir replied there are such signs on all the school properties.

Emily reported that JMGS and Lane had contests for anti-idling artwork. Lane contest ended and 3 winners announced. Posters will be shown at Lane then Emily will make them into electronic form. JGMS contest goes until March 24. Prizes are gift cards to Learning Express, Bedford Farms, Jersey Mikes, and Starbucks.

Patricia noted that schools in other towns have done some citizen science projects that use air quality monitors. Patricia can demonstrate air pollution samplers and help collect data on pollution when vehicles are idling.

John asked if we are going to post winning posters on the town website. Emily will check with Town Manager. Any ideas for where they can be publicized are welcome.

d. Community Choice Aggregation

Bob observed that persistent marketing campaigns for alternative electricity suppliers that residents receive in the mail or via phone call are not as good a deal as Bedford's CCA

Bob did a presentation on CCA at COA to about 20 people. Almost half were enrolled in the CCA. Bob di explain explain how to sign up to a couple of people.

Patricia suggested doing a wider community event at the library to educate about CCA. She'll investigate reserving the room.

e. Multi-Town Gas Leaks

No updates.

f. Town Buildings Energy Updates

Bob noted that the Town's annual report has lots of good detail on Town Buildings.

Taissir's report:



- Police station addition is wrapping up by end of April. Will be > 90% fossil fuel free. There is a small backup gas boiler.
- The Town is receiving bids on Monday for Library HVAC work. Will replace 6 fossil fuel boilers with electric heating/cooling and a small backup fossil boiler.
- Facilities recommended an architect for the new fire station and Selectboard authorized Town Manager to negotiate with that architect.
- Facilities will put PV and a small wind turbine on the Lane roof to power a science project.

Patricia asked if there are any plans to have tours of these buildings. Taissir – yes, planning for Police Station tour, coordinating with Police Chief.

Patricia went to a green school conference and learned about many national resources that may be applicable to Bedford. She will contact Taissir to discuss.

g. Neighboring Towns and Regional Projects and Programs of Interest

None reported.

h. Other information such as attended webinars or other meetings of potential interest to the committee

Dan attended webinar on two carbon-free residential building projects in Lexington. He will try to find a recording and disseminate to the ESC

Patricia was at a green school conference and learned about the World Resources Institute (WRI), Bezos Earth Fund which helps schools electrify bus fleets. Taissir said his office helped Bedford Charter apply for a state grant for an electric school bus but didn't receive it. He will meet with Patricia about connecting Bedford Charter with WRI.

Margot is aware of a grant for additional charging stations that is due in May.

Emily will organize a Cars and Coffee event this spring – will reach out to Green Energy Consumers Alliance.

6. Discussion of a Vice Chair position for the committee

Deferred.

7. Discuss possible agenda topics for the ESC April committee meeting

Committee members will send agenda topics to Robert.



8. Review of proposed committee webpage updates

Dan will investigate linking to video on carbon-free residential buildings, Emily's article, and anti-idling art winners.

9. Adjourn

Margot moved to adjourn; Dan seconded.

Vote: Approved 5-0-0

Meeting Adjourned at 8:42pm