



Clean Energy Future Committee Meeting Minutes

Approved at the 02/26/2021 meeting

January 22, 2021

8:00 – 9:30 a.m.

Virtual Meeting – Hosted on Zoom

Members present: Jim DiTullio, Ken Pruitt, Dave Levy, Emily Sullivan, Shelly Dein, Dan Amstutz, Pasi Miettinen, Ryan Katofsky, Coralie Cooper, Nellie Akenhead, Marc Breslow

Members not present: Adam Chapdelaine, Dianne Mahon

The meeting convened at 8:06 a.m.

Video Meeting Procedures

Mr. Pruitt read a set of prepared remarks explaining the procedures that the Committee would follow to hold a virtual meeting. Governor Baker signed an Executive Order in response to the COVID-19 pandemic allowing virtual meetings, which suspended the usual Open Meeting Law requirement that a quorum of committee members be physically present in order to hold an official committee meeting.

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Pruitt displayed the Minutes from the December 18, 2020 Meeting. Mr. Pruitt highlighted specific edits by Mr. Amstutz as well as other grammatical edits that he made after he had sent the minutes to the Committee. Mr. Miettinen requested some edits to make clear a proposed Zoning Bylaw warrant article for Town Meeting was being proposed by the Committee as a whole and not by Mr. Miettinen as an individual. Ms. Dein made a motion to approve the Minutes as amended. Mr. Katofsky seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. The Committee unanimously approved the December 18, 2020 Meeting Minutes.

Agenda Item 1: Goals for 2021

Mr. Pruitt stated that Mr. Levy contacted him prior to the Meeting to suggest the Committee discuss its goals for 2021. Mr. Pruitt acknowledged this would be a healthy exercise to do every year and welcomed the opportunity to discuss further. Mr. Levy stated he wanted to have a discussion about goals for the CEFC noting that now the Committee is close to successfully completing its Net Zero Plan. It now needs to work holistically regarding how to pursue its role in implementing that Plan, for example deciding if it should implement warrant articles, work with other stakeholders on those efforts, etc.

Ms. Cooper supported proposing warrant articles and engaging in other activism to implement the Net Zero Plan. Mr. Pruitt noted that work on warrant articles needs to begin by December in any given year. Mr. Levy noted work should actually begin in May for warrant articles since some are controversial and require months to discuss and promote.

Mr. Katofsky observed that there is an Energy Working Group that examines various aspects of energy use in Town facilities. He suggested that Group could perhaps serve as a subcommittee of the CEFC to help implement Net Zero Plan measures dealing with Town facilities.

Mr. Katofsky advocated for coming up with a priority listing of initiatives for the Committee to work on in any given year. He also advocated thinking through warrant articles well in advance given how much work will need to get done to get several initiatives passed.

Mr. Pruitt asked two questions: what kind of sub-committees or working groups of the Committee should be created to ensure successful implementation of the Net Zero Plan? He also repeated a related question recently posed to him by Mr. Levy: what kind of Committee should we be? Should we be an advocacy committee for example and if so, what kind of advocacy should we engage in?

Mr. Katofsky noted he would support the CEFC taking a reasonably active role in implementation but bringing many other groups and individuals in to help.

Mr. Amstutz observed that, in cases where Net Zero Plan measures will require warrant articles, it would be logical for the Committee to actively support them. He also noted that the Committee could take on various roles either supporting or directly taking action on various proposals on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Miettinen stated he agreed with most of the comments made by others on this topic. He stated that advance planning and scheduling will be critical for successful implementation of the Net Zero Plan, noting that deadlines for action will be critical.

Mr. Katofsky offered his help to think about timing and implementation of Net Zero Plan measures. He said discussing warrant articles as early as possible is critical.

Mr. Levy discussed Net Zero Buildings measure #3 (NZB 3), "Change zoning or other bylaws that hinder the renovation or construction of net zero energy capable buildings. Create incentives to encourage renovation and new construction projects to result in net zero energy capable buildings." This measure will be a warrant article at the April Town Meeting. Mr. Levy noted that for this warrant article, the Committee will need to make a decision about whether to do more than support the initiative with an endorsement, or whether more active advocacy might be required to help the public and Town Meeting Members understand and support the article.

Mr. Katofsky agreed with Mr. Levy's comments and noted that for this specific warrant article there are advocacy groups ready to help support it.

Ms. Gina Sonder, a Town resident, asked if the Committee will monitor its success in implementing the Net Zero Plan. Mr. Pruitt noted that the Plan does call for the Town to monitor its success in this effort.

Ms. Beth Melofchik, a Town resident, asked if the Committee could identify how many non-conforming lots would be affected by NZB 3, and where they are located. Mr. Miettinen said he could provide that information.

Mr. Parke Wilde, a Town resident, noted that he and Ms. Sonder were proposing a warrant article for April Town Meeting asking the Town to declare a Climate Emergency. Mr. Wilde offered his support for the Net Zero Plan.

Mr. Pruitt noted that Emergency Arlington, which Mr. Wilde and Ms. Sonder represent, has asked to present their warrant article the Committee's February meeting. Ms. Cooper voiced support for this. Mr. Levy voiced concerns about using the Committee's time efficiently. Mr. Miettinen voiced support for discussing how to best to help. Mr. Wilde agreed to send the Committee a video explaining the warrant article and then to make a short presentation at the February meeting.

Agenda Item Two: Finalization of the Net Zero Action Plan

Mr. Pruitt asked for a "high level" discussion of the Plan today, leaving "word smithing" edits to be suggested via email by Committee members before the February meeting. He said he hoped the Committee could vote to approve the Plan at its February 26 meeting, and then present it to the Select Board in March for their endorsement.

Mr. Levy asked if Town Meeting would be the next step for receipt of the Plan. Mr. Pruitt said he was unsure of the next step for presenting to Town Meeting. Mr. Miettinen advocated support for presenting the Plan to Town Meeting. Mr. Breslow also voiced his support for bringing the Plan to Town Meeting.

Mr. Pruitt questioned whether a CEFC report needs to be submitted to Town Meeting as a warrant article.

Jennifer Raitt, Director of Planning and Community Development said no, the Committee does not need to submit a report as warrant article, and can just submit the report to Town Meeting. Town Meeting can vote to "receive" it, rather than vote on the content of the report.

Mr. Katofsky stated that submitting a report to Town Meeting is a good practice. Ms. Cooper agreed, and said submitting a report would be an opportunity for outreach and education.

Mr. Pruitt presented the most recent draft of the Net Zero Plan. He asked CEFC members to directly send him recommended edits after the meeting using the track

changes function in Microsoft Word. If edits are sufficiently substantive or potentially controversial, Mr. Pruitt said he may have to call on the Committee for a special meeting to review the proposed changes. In contrast, minor “word smithing” edits would not require a special meeting for approval.

Mr. Pruitt reviewed the Letter from the Future section, which was written by Mr. Levy. MAPC recommended beginning the Plan with this letter from the future as a light-hearted way of envisioning what success of Plan implementation would look like.

Mr. Pruitt reviewed the Getting to Net Zero Chapter, which the Committee has reviewed previously. Mr. Pruitt thanked those Committee members who have previously reviewed and suggested edits to the Plan.

Mr. Pruitt reviewed the Net Zero Roadmap chapter, which the Committee has also seen multiple times. This chapter contains the Plan’s 31 recommended greenhouse gas mitigation measures in the areas of buildings, mobility, and clean energy supply.

Mr. Pruitt noted that three of the four high priority measures for mobility section are focused on electric vehicles, and asked the Committee whether the high priority section should include more measures not focused on electric vehicles. He stated that we are a car-centric culture, so it is important to make sure cars are as close to zero-emission as possible. Ms. Cooper agreed with Mr. Pruitt, stating that single occupancy trips dominate transportation preferences, and shifting to large-scale electric vehicle adoption is a huge effort. Mr. Miettinen stated that the Plan states clearly that the largest sectors contributing to GHG emissions are building emissions and vehicle emissions, so it makes sense that high priority measures target these areas. Mr. Miettinen also stated that the high priority actions do not explicitly refer to “electric” vehicles, but rather “zero-emissions” vehicles.

Mr. Amstutz stated that this Plan is coordinated with the Connect Arlington Sustainable Transportation Plan. Connect Arlington addresses non-electric vehicle sustainable transportation opportunities. Mr. Amstutz commented that the mobility measures are Arlington-centric, and that the Net Zero Plan could better address supporting regional transportation goals such as congestion pricing or connecting trail networks. Mr. Amstutz stated that this might be a substantive change and could possibly warrant its own measure. Mr. Amstutz emphasized the importance of addressing regional sustainable transportation efforts in the Net Zero Plan. Mr. Pruitt asked Mr. Amstutz to re-read the mobility section of the Plan and send him any edits. Mr. Pruitt will also look at the mobility introduction and add language based on this discussion.

Mr. Pruitt reviewed Appendix A, which is new to the Plan. Appendix A is a quick access implementation table that summarizes the 31 measures in the Roadmap chapter. The Appendix includes links to successful examples of similar measures implemented elsewhere, estimated implementation timeframe, implementation expense, lead entity to implement, key partners in implementing, key measures of success for the measure, and equity considerations for each measure. Appendix A includes tables for buildings, mobility, and clean energy supply. Mr. Pruitt asked the Committee to review the appendix and send him any edits before the February meeting.

Mr. Pruitt asked whether anything major needed to be added to the Plan, or if overall the Committee thought that it includes everything that it needs to be finalized. Ms. Dein stated that in general the Plan is quite good and extensive. Ms. Dein asked the Committee whether it should clarify the timeline and impact of these measures, so that the Committee can best prioritize when to implement measures. She noted that Gina Sonder had asked about measuring outcomes earlier in the meeting. Ms. Dein asked how often the Town would measure outcomes. She asked what realistic intervals for measuring progress for this Plan would be. Mr. Pruitt stated that the measures in this Plan alone will not get Arlington to net zero, and that there will be needed changes to state and federal law, changes in technology and affordability of technology, and changes to incentives and funding opportunities for Arlington to successfully reach net zero. Mr. Pruitt stated that the Plan recommends a full Plan update every 5 years, with GHG inventory updates every 2 years.

Mr. Pruitt asked the Committee whether the Plan should have interim emissions reduction targets, such as targets for 2030 and 2040. The newly released Massachusetts 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap has interim targets for 2030 and 2040.

Mr. Katofsky stated that interim targets make sense at the federal or state level. However, locally Arlington does not have control over some of the policies that impact a community's ability to achieve net zero. Although interim targets might not be helpful, the Committee could determine if interim targets would help implement the plan's measures.

Ms. Cooper encouraged the Committee to establish interim targets.

Mr. Pruitt reminded the Committee about Mr. Miettinen's email to the Committee encouraging Committee members to attend the Arlington Redevelopment Board hearing on Monday 1/25 at 7pm for the Committee's proposed zoning amendment warrant article.

Mr. Miettinen asked whether Arlington already had interim GHG reduction targets. Mr. Pruitt stated that targets were identified in the 2005 Arlington Sustainability Action Plan but stop at the year 2020.

Mr. Pruitt stated that Massachusetts Senate Bill 9, passed recently by the Senate and House and now awaiting action by the Governor, called for a 50% reduction in GHG emissions below 1990 levels by 2030 and 75% reduction by 2040. Mr. Pruitt suggested that interim targets would not need to be a new Plan section, but rather a statement stating the interim targets in the Getting to Net Zero chapter. Mr. Katofsky stated that he does not have a basis for selecting targets other than the State targets. The Plan could state that Arlington would try to achieve the State targets, however there should be some linkage between what actions will be implemented and what the targets are so that the targets are reasonable. Mr. Pruitt pointed out that the State targets in Senate Bill 9 are based on 1990 emissions, and Arlington's GHG emissions inventory is based on 2017 emissions.

Ms. Cooper proposed that the Plan could align with the State targets, but then take into account the different baseline emission years. Mr. Pruitt stated that the methodology used to calculate the State's emissions is different from the methodology used to calculate Arlington's emissions. He suggested that the Plan could have a statement that Arlington supports the State's targets of reducing GHG emissions by 50% by 2030 and 75% by 2040, but does not necessarily commit to those specific targets. The Committee agreed that such a statement should be included in the Plan. Mr. Pruitt said he would draft that language to include in the Plan.

Mr. Pruitt stated that although the Plan identifies measures as high priority and priority, it does not identify implementation timeline. Mr. Pruitt asked the Committee whether it wanted to identify timelines or decide which measures to prioritize on an annual basis. The Committee's consensus was that it did not want to identify timelines for implementation of specific measures in the Plan.

Mr. Katofsky motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Dein seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37am.

Submitted by Dave Levy.