



## **Clean Energy Future Committee Meeting Minutes**

*Approved at the 06-25-2021 meeting*

May 28, 2021

8:15 – 9:30 a.m.

Virtual Meeting – Hosted on Zoom

Members present: Coralie Cooper (as Chair), Jim DiTullio, Ken Pruitt, Dave Levy, Emily Sullivan, Pasi Miettinen, Ryan Katofsky, Marc Breslow, Shelly Dein, Dianne Mahon, Adam Chapdelaine, Dan Amstutz

Also attending: Brucie Moulton, Tom Ehbrecht

Members not present: Nellie Aikenhead

The meeting convened at 8:17 a.m.

### **Video Meeting Procedures**

Ms. Cooper 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**

The Committee reviewed two sets of meeting minutes, the first from the April 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting. Ms. Cooper asked for comments. Mr. Amstutz made a correction that the phrase “term limits” should be changed to “length of term.” Ms. Dein motioned to approve the minutes with that amendment. The Committee unanimously approved the April 23 meeting minutes as amended.

The Committee then reviewed the minutes from the May 14 meeting. Ms. Dein motioned to approve the minutes as written. The Committee unanimously approved the May 14 meeting minutes.

### **Agenda Item 1: Review of Town Meeting Warrant Article 38**

Ms. Cooper congratulated the Committee on passage of Town Meeting Warrant Article 38, which will now allow the replacement of home foundations on nonconforming lots if the resulting structure is highly energy efficient. She also thanked those who spearheaded the effort for the CEFC (Pasi, Dave, Jim, and Ryan) as well as Brucie Moulton and Pat Hanlon who also worked on the Article 38 campaign. Ms. Cooper then

asked Mr. Miettinen to provide more details. Mr. Miettinen highlighted Mr. Levy and Mr. DiTullio, who are both also Town Meeting Members, who gave strong speeches in favor of the Article at Town Meeting. Mr. Katofsky observed that the lopsided vote in favor itself suggested that the Town is ready for more ambitious efforts to combat climate change.

Mr. DiTullio posited that this measure, by itself, will not result in a large reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. However, he said there is clearly a critical mass of town meeting members ready to support more proposals from the CEFC. He stated that the same playbook of collaborating with other committees and outside volunteer groups can work in future campaigns. He thanked Brucie Moulton from Mothers Out Front for all the work she and Mothers Out Front did in this effort.

Ms. Dein seconded that the warrant article is a modest change and wanted to know how much data we can track to see how many people will take advantage of it.

Mr. Katofsky echoed Ms. Dein's remarks in terms of the impact of the warrant article and asked whether it would make sense to do outreach to educate people on next steps. He wondered whether a statement of thanks to Town Meeting for supporting Warrant Article 38 would be appropriate. The statement could also note that this measure is just a step on the Town's journey to Net Zero by 2050.

Ms. Dein and Mr. Pruitt discussed the process for determining Home Energy Rating System (HERS) scores from construction permits at the Inspectional Services Department.

Mr. Miettinen said he wants the Committee to publicly celebrate achievements like Warrant Article 38 and other measures from the Net Zero Action Plan (NZAP) going forward. He also mentioned that the Legislature's Next Generation Roadmap climate bill, signed into law by Governor Baker in March, could become important for Arlington because it includes a requirement for the creation of a statewide net zero energy stretch code.

Ms. Cooper wondered if the Committee could look into developing a template one-pager to highlight houses that achieve Net Zero.

Mr. Miettinen noted it was important to provide education and outreach efforts to encourage Net Zero homes to be built. Ms. Cooper mentioned that Ms. Mahon had made a comment in the Zoom meeting chat suggesting that a flier educating people on HERS and Net Zero homes could be prepared and made available at Inspectional Services.

## **Agenda Item 2: Setting Priorities**

Ms. Cooper asked Mr. Pruitt to update the Committee on the work of the Net Zero Action Plan implementation working group to discuss what comes next. Mr. Pruitt made a slide presentation that highlighted the criteria for determining how to prioritize which measures to advance and when. For example: the level of priority given to each

measure in the NZAP; the expected magnitude of greenhouse gas reduction; required resources to implement the measure; and necessary lead time, for example if Town Meeting passage was required. Mr. Pruitt noted that the committee can't work on all remaining 29 measures in one year so it will need to prioritize a smaller number of measures for the coming year.

Mr. Katofsky noted that only a handful of initiatives would make sense for prioritization this year. Ms. Cooper noted certain factors, such as funding opportunities, could make a project more or less viable at any given time so committee members need to be mindful of that.

Mr. Breslow said that GHG impact should be the highest priority. Mr. Pruitt noted that preference. Mr. Amstutz observed that the Committee's two wins so far (passage of the fossil fuel bylaw at the November 2020 Town Meeting, and passage of Warrant Article 38 at this year's Town Meeting in May) were time-limited actions but some of the NZAP measures could take years to implement.

Mr. Pruitt next reviewed the NZAP implementation working group's suggested priorities in each of the three sectors: Net Zero Buildings (NZB), Zero Emissions Mobility (ZEM), and Clean Energy Supply (CES). Under the NZB section, the Electrify Arlington campaign and associated website were two priorities suggested for the coming year. Mr. Pruitt noted these would be a huge lift and doubted they would be complete in one year (but could get started). The next measure suggested by the Working Group was advocacy in favor of a Net Zero Energy Stretch Code. This is timely, because recently passed legislation (the Next Generation Climate Roadmap) requires such a stretch code to be developed by the state Department of Energy Resources within 18 months. The Town would advocate, both directly and through its legislative delegation, for adoption of a strong stretch code. The final NZB measure Mr. Pruitt highlighted was exploring whether to create a commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy program in Arlington. He noted that the Department of Planning and Community Development was considering outreach to commercial property owners to gauge interest in such a program.

Under Zero Emissions Mobility (ZEM), Mr. Pruitt said the implementation working group had highlighted three priorities: 1) supporting full implementation of the Connect Arlington sustainable transportation plan; 2) providing a suite of education and awareness building services to promote electric vehicle adoption (as part of the Electrify Arlington website); and 3) adopting a zero-emission municipal fleet plan/policy (complete transition to zero emission municipal vehicle purchases by 2030).

Mr. Amstutz noted some changes to parking regulations were passed in the current Town Meeting, such as a measure to allow the ARB and ZBA to reduce the required number of parking spaces for proposed developments in all business districts to zero. Reforming parking regulations and policies is another priority of the NZAP.

Mr. Pruitt then turned to the Clean Energy Supply (CES) recommendations from the implementation working group. He said there was just one high priority recommendation: to increase the default level of renewable electricity in the Arlington

Community Electricity (ACE) program. He said the Town should try to go for a large increase in renewable electricity at the default level during next year's (2022) contract renewal for 2023-2025, and that this would be an important step in reaching the goal of 100% renewable electricity in the default ACE program by 2030. Mr. DiTullio asked what the current default was. Mr. Katofsky noted Arlington's default was 11% above the state minimum based on the current contract. Mr. Pruitt stated the current level of renewable energy in the ACE default level is 29% once the 18% renewables required by the state is included. Mr. Katofsky said the state requirement increases annually so Arlington should be at 31% next year.

Ms. Mahon recommended that for goals the CEFC identifies, we should create educational fliers and/or a website and identify a Town office(s) that would have that info in their office(s). For example, information about Electrify Arlington could be at the Treasurer's office when people come in regarding parking tickets, excise tax, etc., and they could be given a flier.

Mr. Pruitt said that for certain priorities we may need to think about volunteers, the use of significant existing staff time, and in the case of Electrify Arlington, possibly a new permanent part-time staff position to be an electrification coach. He suggested that, for this CEFC meeting, the Committee should reach a consensus that these are a good set of measures to pursue, rather than specifying a lot of work on specific measures.

Mr. Amstutz recommended the CEFC create a spreadsheet to track progress on measures, with color coding to indicate status. He also suggested the CEFC identify champions to be sure someone is leading the charge and providing updates. Mr. Katofsky and Mr. Pruitt agreed and said there should be ownership of each measure on the CEFC, not necessarily doing all the work, but keeping track of progress. At the end of the NZAP there are summary tables showing likely leads, cost, measures of success, and other categories for each of the 31 measures.

Mr. Katofsky added that we should have an action planning template to track progress, since these are not 'one and done' kinds of activities. Ken will create a draft template with lead, timeline, partners, etc.

Ms. Dein noted that in the buildings category the NZAP lists advocating for a state net zero energy stretch code and that doesn't seem like a big effort for the Town since most of the work is at the state level. Mr. Pruitt said Senator Barrett is concerned DOER will come out with a stretch code missing some requirements or the requirements could be weak. Senator Barrett has said that as many communities as possible should put as much pressure as possible on the state to adopt a strong stretch code.

Mr. Miettinen added that although it may not be a big lift, the CEFC has relevant input to share on the stretch code since our work on Warrant Article 38 generated important information that we could share.

Ms. Cooper noted the CEFC still has not identified any measures to take to the next Town Meeting. She said this decision will likely require analysis, such as to determine the measure with the greatest GHG reduction.

Ms. Cooper noted Mr. Pruitt had said earlier that it is possible a new staff person to work on Electrify Arlington could require some kind of Town Meeting action. Mr. DiTullio stated that at TM just the budget is voted on but not individual positions. The request would first need to go through the finance committee. Mr. Amstutz said the issue would need to be raised at the end of summer since this is the beginning of the budget cycle. This will likely be a fair amount of work to respond to questions. Need to start very soon.

Mr. Pruitt said the implementation group will meet every other week to refine the list of priorities to work on this year. Ms. Dein said the Electrify Arlington campaign could be important in that net zero is a big shift in mindset for people. Beginning to lay the groundwork on the importance of electrification should be pursued sooner rather than later.

Mr. Katofsky asked if the Town monitors how its EV chargers are being used. If a lack of chargers is becoming a bottleneck to charging this would bump up the priority to add more public charging stations to relieve the bottleneck. Mr. Pruitt agreed and added there is a warrant article supporting more charging infrastructure in the current Town Meeting.

Mr. Pruitt said that for the Clean Energy Supply section, the CEFC doesn't need to worry about the municipal electricity supply measure for a year or two since the contract won't come up for consideration until 2023. Ms. Dein added we may need a campaign at Town Meeting for a change to the supply. Mr. Pruitt noted that adding renewable energy certificates (RECs) into the town supply can be done without Town Meeting approval. This will mainly impact the Town electricity costs and the school budget in particular. Mr. Katofsky said by 2030 the Town might be able to enter directly into a contract with a wind farm and these choices could reduce cost as compared to layering in RECs.

At this point in the CEFC meeting, comment from the public was taken.

Ms. Moulton said that the fall community education opportunities need to be finalized in early June. This is a great opportunity for public outreach on Electrify Arlington. Mr. Ehbrecht said the CEFC could have a panel on the key next steps on net zero. When the CEFC has initiatives set for the year, we could arrange to present on them to Arlington Community Education.

Mr. Pruitt noted the next CEFC meeting may be in person depending on whether the Governor extends his emergency order allowing virtual meetings. He asked if the Committee would be OK meeting in person on June 25 if the Order were not extended. Various Members expressed support for doing so.

The Meeting ended at 9:27 am.

Submitted by Dave Levy.