



Clean Energy Future Committee Meeting Minutes

Approved at the 07-23-2021 meeting

June 25, 2021

8:15 – 9:30 a.m.

Lyon's Hearing Room, Arlington Town Hall – Meeting in Person

Members present: Coralie Cooper (as Chair), Jim DiTullio, Ken Pruitt, Dave Levy, Emily Sullivan, Pasi Miettinen (by phone), Marc Breslow (by phone), Shelly Dein, Diane Mahon, Dan Amstutz

Members not present: Nellie Aikenhead, Ryan Katofsky

Ms. Cooper convened the meeting at 8:19 am by taking a roll call for those in person and on the phone.

Meeting Minutes

The Committee reviewed the Meeting Minutes from the May 28, 2021 Meeting. Ms. Cooper asked for comments. Mr. Amstutz submitted a set of edits to the Minutes for the Committee's review. Mr. Pruitt reviewed the comments, noting a substantive change in Agenda Item Two regarding parking. Ms. Cooper asked for any other changes. Ms. Cooper asked to add page numbers to the Meeting Minutes. Ms. Mahon motioned to approve the Minutes. Mr. Pruitt seconded the Motion. The Committee unanimously approved the May 28 Meeting Minutes.

Agenda Item 1: Electrify Arlington Campaign

Ms. Cooper noted the Committee has discussed Electrify Arlington in previous meetings. The campaign would include three measures from the Net Zero Action Plan (NZAP): Net Zero Buildings 1 (NZB 1) (Electrify Arlington campaign), NZB 4 (Electrify Arlington website) and Zero Emissions Mobility 3 (ZEM 3) (comprehensive information for residents about electric vehicles). Ms. Cooper wanted to update the Committee on efforts in support of Electrify Arlington to date. Ms. Cooper noted that she would appreciate it if someone volunteered to co-lead the campaign. She said Electrify Arlington would be one of the main CEFC climate efforts this year and next year.

Mr. Pruitt stated he thought Electrify Arlington would simultaneously be the most important and most difficult part of the NZAP to implement.

Mr. Pruitt said he thought it could take up to two years to get the campaign fully up and running. This could include hiring a part time or full time staff person to coordinate the program, which would include working with Town residents and businesses to make electrification choices. Mr. Pruitt noted that if we want to fully electrify the Town, we will need to take the steps outlined in the NZAP.

Mr. Pruitt then passed out a worksheet for Electrify Arlington which included information about NZB 1 and NZB 4, from the NZAP, which discussed an Electrify Arlington Campaign and Website.

Mr. Breslow asked about other Towns that have taken on such an initiative. Mr. Pruitt noted Newton has a website on this topic. The website also allows an opportunity to schedule a call with a volunteer energy coach to discuss options. Mr. Miettinen noted that Belmont ran programs for heat pumps and electric vehicles with various volunteer led efforts.

Ms. Dein noted that an outcome of this program could be to have contractors on board for the duration of this effort. Mr. Pruitt said that for the 2019 HeatSmart campaign, one installer was selected per technology. However, he said that in retrospect, the committee responsible for HeatSmart thought it would have been better to have more than one installer per technology. Mr. Pruitt thought any program should be open to multiple contractors, with a revisit of that concept every few years.

Ms. Dein worried about the liability potentially involved with having volunteers assisting homeowners on specific details. Mr. Pruitt agreed with this concern and noted it would have to be studied further. Mr. Pruitt noted a major goal would be to have volunteers help homeowners simply determine where to start on their path to home and vehicle electrification.

Mr. Breslow expressed concern about the lack of good information about heat pumps and other technologies from the standpoint of a homeowner making an economical choice. Mr. Pruitt agreed this is a challenge. Ms. Dein noted that cost was not the only decision-making factor for some – they want to make an environmentally-conscious choice. Mr. Breslow acknowledged the point but reiterated that costs need to be knowable.

Mr. Amstutz asked for clarification that electric vehicles would come under the Electrify Arlington website. Mr. Pruitt said that would be true. Mr. Amstutz asked that information about all transportation options be included – not just electric vehicles but also bicycle, pedestrian and mass transit options. Mr. Pruitt agreed, noting that one of the key strategies expressed in the NZAP was to give people better options than driving.

Mr. Amstutz asked how discount pricing would be included for heat pump equipment. Mr. Pruitt responded that this was not currently known, but perhaps the HeatSmart campaign model could be emulated, whereby selected technology installers would be required to offer discounted pricing in return for being part of Electrify Arlington.

Ms. Cooper asked for volunteers to help with Electrify Arlington. She also asked whether our first effort should be to create the website.

Mr. Miettinen stated that websites are helpful but do not need to be detailed or elaborate. He said the hard part of this effort would be public outreach and engagement, which will have a cost. Ms. Cooper asked if outreach materials should be completed soon. Mr. Miettinen said that would be important but first we should develop details of the entire campaign.

Ms. Mahon commented that an Arlington resident, Mr. Frank Callahan, is President of the Massachusetts Building Trades Council, a labor union. Ms. Mahon would like to run the Electrify Arlington concept by Mr. Callahan to solicit his feedback on this subject because especially building electrification could mean the creation of a lot of jobs. Ms. Cooper and Mr. Pruitt welcomed the idea.

Mr. Pruitt noted that for HeatSmart, that committee spent considerable time thinking its campaign through, including concepts such as involving community members like Mr. Callahan. Thus Mr. Pruitt welcomed more volunteers for this effort. Ms. Cooper asked for more working group committee members to sketch out an implementation plan and let Ms. Cooper know if you're interested in volunteering. Mr. Breslow volunteered. A sign-up sheet was circulated.

Agenda Item 2: NZAP Priorities

Ms. Cooper then turned to the next agenda item on other Net Zero Action Plan priorities, including NZB 6 advocating for a state Net Zero Energy Stretch Code. Ms. Cooper mentioned Amos Meeks is working on arranging a call to discuss this effort.

Mr. Pruitt noted that the Committee had previously stated it was supportive of involving non-committee volunteers in helping implement the NZAP. However, he recommended the Committee discuss specific roles as they come up, in this case with Amos Meeks volunteering to lead NZB 6 implementation. Mr. DiTullio said he had no concerns with the concept. Mr. Amstutz noted at least one Committee member should be present for this and all other NZAP implementation efforts to monitor the work and be able to report back to the full Committee. Mr. Pruitt agreed with this concept. Ms. Cooper asked that Committee members present in any campaign or project from the NZAP report progress at each CEFC meeting.

Mr. Pruitt called the Committee's attention to a color-coded NZAP implementation spreadsheet, noting that yellow means the measure is in start-up phase.

Ms. Mahon expressed her interest in working on NZB 14, a measure that calls for partnering with local vocational / technical schools to promote HVAC instruction so there are more local HVAC workers in the future. Mr. Pruitt noted that the Committee had not yet selected that measure for implementation this year, but that we could re-open the prioritization discussion if desired. Ms. Mahon declined but offered to help work on that measure once it was prioritized for action in the future.

Mr. Levy asked a question about whether there is a limit to maximum CEFC membership. Mr. Pruitt noted two official Committee slots are empty, one for a DPW representative and one for a representative from the School Dept. Ms. Mahon said she would look into whether she could find a volunteer from the DPW.

Mr. Levy asked if we should be expanding the number members on the Committee to help with volunteer efforts. Ms. Mahon said the Select Board could add Committee members if desired.

Mr. Pruitt noted that CEFC support for implementation of the Connect Arlington Sustainable Transportation Plan, which is NZAP measure ZEM 1, had been prioritized for action this year but as of yet no one had volunteered to lead the effort. Ms. Dein stated that she does not have a full understanding of what the Connect Arlington plan will entail, so it is difficult to determine how to support it. Mr. Amstutz said the final plan is not available yet as it is going to the Select Board for endorsement on July 19th.

Mr. Pruitt noted ZEM 8, advocacy for improved utility rate designs to promote electric vehicle charging, did not yet have a Committee lead responsible for it. However, he said it may be a non-issue since the state is currently working with the utilities to reform utility rates for EV charging.

Ms. Cooper asked Brucie Moulton whether she needed any input from the Committee as she works to propose one or more sessions for the Arlington Community Education program in the fall. Brucie asked for volunteers to participate in a panel on electrification. She also mentioned this event in the fall would be the first of many public engagements she is planning on having this year.

Ms. Cooper asked if there was additional Committee business to discuss.

Ms. Dein spoke in favor of holding meetings virtually, because it is easier to meet and to hear the discussion via a virtual meeting. She said that calling in when she could not attend in person meetings has been challenging since it is hard to hear those not sitting close to the microphone. Mr. Breslow noted being on the phone is less desirable and would prefer Zoom meetings, in part due to his work schedule.

Mr. Pruitt noted that we are currently limited to either an in person meeting or a Zoom meeting, since hybrid meetings are not yet possible (additional technology would be needed). Ms. Mahon stated she would look into whether or how hybrid meetings could occur.

Mr. DiTullio noted that given the Governor's law, the Committee has flexibility until April 1st, 2022 and can hold virtual meetings until that time. He also noted that virtual meetings do allow more public input given remote participation capabilities.

It was agreed that through September, CEFC meetings will be remote, and that in September we will reevaluate whether to resume in-person meetings.

Mr. Pruitt noted that it might be difficult to meet in August due to vacation schedules. He said he would bring the issue up again at the July meeting.

Ms. Mahon moved to adjourn. Mr. Pruitt seconded.

The Meeting ended at 9:24am.

Submitted by Dave Levy.