



Clean Energy Future Committee Meeting Minutes

December 3, 2021
8:15 – 9:30 a.m.
Virtually Conducted

Members present: Coralie Cooper (as Chair), Jim DiTullio, Dave Levy, Marc Breslow, Dan Amstutz, Adam Chapdelaine, Pasi Miettinen

Also attending: Amos Meeks, Pat Hanlon, Brucie Moulton, Susan Keane

Members not present: Nellie Aikenhead, Diane Mahon, Shelly Dein, Ryan Katofsky,

Ms. Cooper convened the meeting at 8:18 am. Ms. Cooper explained that emergency rules for the Open Meeting Law still allow public meetings to take place remotely, due to concerns about COVID-19, 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. The Governor's original Executive Order had been superseded by recent legislation extending the ability for public meetings to be virtual until April 2022. Ms. Cooper then took a roll call for those in person and on the phone.

Meeting Minutes

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the October 22, 2021 meeting and Ms. Cooper asked for any suggested changes or additions. Mr. DiTullio asked for one edit to correct a spelling error. There were no other changes suggested by Committee members. Mr. Miettinen motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. DiTullio seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously approved the October 22nd meeting minutes.

Agenda Item 1: Ms. Cooper notified the Committee that she moved from Arlington to Somerville at the end of October. She will remain as Chair through the April meeting, when the one-year term of the Chair will end. Afterwards, she will remain on the Committee. In other related Committee business, the replacement for Ken Pruitt is expected to start as soon as January 2022.

Agenda Item 2: Warrant Article Discussion

Ms. Cooper stated there are several potential warrant articles for discussion during today's meeting. The first item is proposed warrant article language circulated before the meeting that Mr. Benson (member of the Arlington Redevelopment Board) provided for consideration by the CEFC. The CEFC reviewed the language on the screen along with comments in the margin provided by several Committee members. Mr. Benson provided an overview of the language.

Mr. Benson turned to the first section (of three) of the proposed warrant articles. The first item would add a sentence to an already existing paragraph in section 3.4.4 of the zoning bylaw. Section 3.4.4 says that sustainable practices should be considered in the environmental design review process and the additional sentence would say "projects shall be consistent with the town's Net Zero Action Plan." The intent is to give the ARB more authority to implement the NZAP when considering a special permit.

The second potential warrant article item would add language to section 6, including a definition of solar energy systems and a requirement for solar energy systems for commercial buildings. The proposed language states that any project in the environmental design review process (most commercial buildings) would require a solar system on its roof for 50% unless it had a specific exemption. Regarding shading of solar energy systems, the proposed language states that if a proposed facility would shade more than 10% of the time, compensation would be required for the current system.

The Committee then turned to the comments in the margin provided by various Committee members. The Committee discussed a comment on parking garages. Mr. Breslow mentioned the possibility of having a peer review on the solar sections. Ms. Cooper asked if additional research is needed for the solar portions of the initiative noting that Watertown did a multi-year study. Mr. Benson said the study was largely for specific commercial buildings.

Mr. Levy asked a series of logistical questions around process. Mr. Benson said the CEFC could sponsor the warrant article(s) and attend the next ARB meeting to present the language to the ARB. The Committee discussed the fact that warrant articles must be filed by January 28, 2022. Thus, any planning to present to ARB would need to be done prior to that time.

Ms. Cooper then turned the discussion to a warrant article that would update an existing bylaw stating municipal buildings should be LEED Silver or better. The CEFC has discussed sponsoring a warrant article to update the language in previous CEFC meetings. Ms. Cooper said a sub-group is working on draft warrant article language and this would be circulated to the CEFC prior to the January meeting. During the January meeting, the proposed language will be discussed and the CEFC may vote to sponsor the warrant article.

Agenda Item 3: CEFC Working Group Updates

Mr. Amos Meeks updated the CEFC on the development of a net zero stretch code. Mr. Meeks noted that the proposed language for the stretch code is expected to be released for public comment in January. Mr. Meeks said that the working group would focus on outreach and education to help people understand the benefits of a net zero stretch code. Mr. Meeks said Mr. Chapdelaine had obtained signatures from 30 municipalities for a sign-on letter urging the Department of Energy Resources to develop a net zero stretch code. Mr. Miettinen complimented Mr. Chapdelaine's work to get numerous municipalities to support the release of the stretch code and stated a net zero stretch code for new building construction will make Arlington's work to achieve the NZAP easier. Mr. Hanlon discussed a phased approach about the release of the stretch code and said that the timeline for a stretch code is still uncertain. Mr. Hanlon said a resolution sponsored by Arlington, along with other municipalities, would be helpful. Mr. Miettinen voiced support for Mr. Hanlon's recommendation on a resolution.

Ms. Cooper updated the Committee on Electrify Arlington (EA) and the development of an EA website and coaching service for outreach to town residents. Ms. Cooper said the EA workgroup had begun discussing the website with the Town's communication director and once Mr. Pruitt's replacement has started work, the EA workgroup will work with him/her on the website development and coaching program.

Agenda Item 4: Presentation by Dan Amstutz on Connect Arlington

Ms. Cooper then turned to Connect Arlington, the Town's Sustainable Transportation Plan. Mr. Amstutz presented the plan, which provides goals and strategies to improve transportation within Arlington over the next 20 years. First and foremost, the plan prioritizes walking, cycling, and public transportation over single-occupancy vehicle travel. This would accomplish improvements in safety as well as carbon reduction.

Mr. Amstutz noted that there are ways to design roads to help pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation. In addition, Mr. Amstutz highlighted curb and parking management strategies to help people to travel more efficiently and safely. Mr. Amstutz then noted the specific strategies to implement the plan and metrics to track the success of implementation.

Mr. Levy asked Mr. Amstutz about federal funding for some (or all) of the initiatives. Mr. Amstutz noted there has been federal funding coming from the State to help with quick initiatives. Mr. Amstutz then noted there could be more federal funding coming from sources such as the recently passed Infrastructure Bill. The Town will continue to look for grant funding for transportation projects in Arlington.

Agenda Item 5: Scheduling Next CEFC Meeting

Ms. Cooper and asked if the Members could make January 14th as a date. The Members present agreed that would work.

The Committee then motioned and unanimously voted to adjourn the Meeting at 9:29am.

Submitted by Dave Levy.