



Clean Energy Future Committee Meeting Minutes

March 25, 2022
8:15 – 9:30 a.m.
Virtually Conducted

Members present: Nellie Aikenhead, Dan Amstutz, Coralie Cooper (as Chair), Marc Breslow, Adam Chapdelaine, James DiTullio, Talia Fox, Eric Helmuth, Ryan Katofsky, Dave Levy, Shelly Dein, David Morgan.

Also attending: Eugene Benson, Patrick Hanlon, Susan Keane, Jennifer Susse

Members not present: Pasi Miettinen

Ms. Cooper convened the meeting at 8:15 am. Ms. Cooper read a brief statement noting the legislation that permits virtual meetings. Ms. Cooper then took a roll call for those in person and on the phone.

1. Review and Approve Meeting Minutes

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the February 25, 2022 meeting. Ms. Cooper asked for any corrections, additions, or changes to the draft minutes. There were none. Mr. Chapdelaine moved to approve the minutes and Mr. Katofsky seconded the motion. The Committee then approved the February 25th meeting minutes.

2. Discussion of Hybrid Virtual/In-Person Meeting Pilot

Jennifer Susse and Eric Helmuth are on a committee to explore hybrid meeting participation. The committee surveyed members of town committees and members of the public to understand interest in hybrid participation. There were some concerns expressed by participants of the survey and so the committee decided to undertake a hybrid pilot. The hybrid pilot will run for 6-8 months. The legislature's special provision allowing for remote meeting expires on July 15th and the pilot would start then. Three rooms will be set up, including the Select Board, the Den (middle range technology room), and the third is an Owl that follows people for video and voice. There will be some training at the beginning of the pilot, but the town won't provide a person to be at hybrid meetings. After town meeting, the committee will finalize the schedule and materials to support committees using the hybrid approach. Committees can join the pilot and drop out at any point in the process. Mr. Helmuth said that as of July 15th committees will have to meet in person and there will be physical quorum requirements in order to meet. The hybrid meeting committee is looking for a representative group of

Town committees to participate. Mr. Breslow said his experience with hybrid meetings is that people participating remotely on their laptops have a hard time hearing. The committee is looking at this potential problem and testing different technologies. Mr. DiTullio said there is an expectation the legislature will make some long-term changes to the open meeting law by July 15th but there is no certainty of what the changes will be. It's also possible the legislature won't address this issue until July 31st and the committee may have to meet in person for one meeting. Ms. Susse said there could be as much as a year gap before the legislature acts. Ms. Dein asked if the committee participates in the pilot, will some people have to commit to attend in person and some people have to commit to attend virtually? Mr. Breslow asked what a quorum is? Ms. Susse said a majority of the members. Mr. Katofsky said he didn't see a downside to joining the pilot. Ms. Fox said she would help with technology in the pilot. The Committee agreed to put the CEFC on the list of committees participating in the pilot.

3. Updates on NZAP Implementation from workgroup chairs:

ACE Program: Mr. Katofsky said the workgroup plans to bring an ACE proposal to the Select Board on the 30th of March. To date, residents have been saved more than \$2 million dollars in the program. The way the program works, is the town buys electricity from the market first and then layers the renewable energy certificate (REC) cost on top of that. The plan is to issue a request for proposals will go out in spring to get contract in place for the fall. Ms. Dein asked if it needs to go to the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) for plan amendment. Ms. Fox said no. The range request for ACE is 15% to 25% above the state requirement. The current ACE program is the State obligation plus 11%. Mr. Levy asked if the town would consider a higher percent. Mr. Katofsky said there is a cost concern and residents can always opt up. Mr. Levy said that conventional electricity costs will not likely go down. The way the ACE program keeps costs low is to do a better job of procurement of electricity than the utilities. Ms. Fox said it will be framed to the Select Board as – what is the highest percent renewable the Select Board will agree to? Ms. Dein asked how many households have opted out/down? Ms. Fox said about 1,500 have opted out, but we would have to confirm that number. Newton created an opt-out model but they did considerable outreach. Newton is at 60% additional renewables for their program (above the State requirement). Mr. Chapdelaine added that Newton is still more affluent than Arlington and there is more sensitivity in Arlington to increasing costs for residents than in Newton. Mr. Breslow stated that the 100% opt up increases costs by 3 cents per kilowatt hour, and electricity costs are already higher in Massachusetts than the rest of the country. Because of this, he thinks staying at a lower priced product might be best. Mr. Katofsky said the basic service cost will change 5 times in the 3-year period that is covered by the ACE contract so prices will change a number of times.

Municipal Building Warrant Article – Ms. Cooper gave a recap. Doug Heim provided language to update the bylaw saying municipal buildings need to be LEED Silver or better. The workgroup discussed a few items such as which Town body would be responsible for reviewing applications for exemption. Mr. Chapdelaine said the workgroup decided that because Arlington is undertaking a building electrification study for the school buildings this year and because there would be no building that will be updated this year, the workgroup proposed to the Select Board to delay voting on the

change at the upcoming town meeting. In addition, the requirement would need to be updated by the result of the electrification study. Mr. Levy asked what action we are asking Town Meeting to take on the warrant article? Mr. Chapdelaine said the draft for the Board is no action with a comment that reads: additional time is needed to work out appropriate processes and standards. The board hopes this item will return at the 2023 Town Meeting. Mr. Katofsky suggested that instead of “gas emissions” the wording should be “GHG emissions.” Mr. Chapdelaine said he would pass that recommendation on to Doug Heim. Ms. Fox asked for the work in the coming year if she can rely on CEFC members to assist? Mr. Chapdelaine said Jim Feeney and the new facilities director and someone from the permanent town building committee will continue to be a part of this conversation. Ms. Dein asked if a net zero stretch code that requires electrification comes out this year, will the municipal building warrant article become moot? Mr. Chapdelaine said he suspects the State will not put in place an electrification requirement and because of that the Town will want to do more than what the State ends up putting in place for the opt-in stretch code. If there is a true net zero stretch code with electrification required, the warrant article will be moot.

Electrify Arlington: Ms. Cooper said the workgroup met to discuss the website and will meet again next week. Ms. Fox said we are still working out how we can rely on an external consultant. We are moving fast because there are a lot of incentives that have become available.

Solar Warrant article: Ms. Dein said the Redevelopment Board held a meeting where the solar warrant article was discussed. The warrant article would require solar on most commercial buildings to cover 50% of the roof space and 90% of parking structures. There are proposed exceptions, such as where a roof is shaded. A select board member wanted a provision that an adjacent property could be built to the maximum amount even if it shades a solar array. Ms. Fox has proposed language. With those qualifications, it seems the Board will support it. The ARB will vote on the warrant article on April 4th. Mr. Benson suggested a CEFC member attend the April 4th meeting to answer any questions that come up.

Net zero stretch code: Mr. Hanlon said the resolution was approved by the Board. It will be article 73. There is a re-purposed website from the bylaw in 2020 that provides information on the resolution. It will be important in the run up to Town Meeting to familiarize Town Meeting members of the background on the opt-in stretch code. And, it will also be important to reach out at precinct meetings. We won't do as extensive outreach as we did on the clean heat article. Most of the debate will take place during precinct meeting and it will be important there is someone there to answer questions that come up. Mr. Levy said he can cover the precinct 16/18 meeting. Ms. Dein suggested we put together a team that attends a few meetings to advocate on both the warrant article and the solar by-law. Mr. Benson said he can attend the precinct 8/10 meetings.

Coordination among community members: Ms. Fox said there is an effort underway to work with Mothers Out Front and other groups to provide support on these warrant articles. Mr. Hanlon asked if we are coordinating just on the articles the CEFC supported or more broadly on all the environmental warrant articles. Ms. Dein said it

would be helpful for the CEFC vote on the solar article. Ms. Fox said she can help with materials. The report which was prepared for ARB could be helpful for discussions at precinct meetings. Ms. Keane said she is happy to bring this item to the MOF for support. Ms. Fox said that the CEFC could consider voting at the April 22nd meeting on the warrant article.

The Committee confirmed the next meeting on April 22 at 8:15am. The Committee then motioned and unanimously voted to adjourn the Meeting.

Submitted by Coralie Cooper.