



Clean Energy Future Committee Meeting Minutes

April 22, 2022
8:15 – 9:30 a.m.
Virtually Conducted

Members present: Nellie Aikenhead, Marc Breslow, Shelly Dein, Coralie Cooper (as chair), Eric Helmuth, Dave Levy, Jim DiTullio, Ryan Katofsky, David Morgan, Talia Fox.

Also attending: Brucie Moulton, John DiModica

Members not present: Pasi Miettinen, Dan Amstutz, Adam Chapdelaine

Ms. Cooper convened the meeting at 8:15 am. Ms. Cooper read a brief statement noting the legislation that permits virtual meetings.

1. Review and Approve Meeting Minutes

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the March 25, 2022 meeting. Ms. Cooper asked for any corrections, additions, or changes to the draft minutes. Mr. Katofsky stated that in the section on the ACE proposal, the sentence on Newton should read that Newton is at 60 percent extra renewables (over and above the State requirement) for a total of approximately 80 percent renewable electricity. Ms. Dein motioned to approve the minutes and Mr. Katofsky seconded. The Committee then approved the March 25th meeting minutes.

2. Discuss Solar Bylaw (NZB 11, Warrant Article 30)

The ARB voted to approve the solar by-law. When the CEFC originally discussed the idea of the solar bylaw, the Committee decided not to vote on approval. Shelly Dein provided an update on the solar bylaw. The ARB modified the draft proposal and then unanimously voted to approve it. The bylaw would require projects that go before the ARB for environmental design review (EDR) to build a solar rooftop array that covers 50% of roof area. If there is a parking structure, the top of the structure would be required to have an array that covers 90% of the roof area. Exemptions would be allowed in cases with insufficient solar exposure or inadequate structural load capacity. The ARB modified the language in three ways: 1) removed previous language, which said there should be a requirement for a solar array on roofs where less than 50% of the roof area can be covered; 2) added language to say that trees would not need to be cut down and that new trees could be planted regardless of impact on solar arrays; 3) clarified that the existence of a solar array would not prevent abutting properties to

develop in the future if these developments shade the arrays. The expectation is that most buildings affected by this will be built to maximum height and are unlikely to be shaded by an abutting roof. With those modifications, the ARB unanimously approved the by-law.

There have been several precinct meetings. Ms Dein, Mr. Levy, and Gene Benson have attended. MOF has done some outreach to Town Meeting members. MOF also prepared a designed, two-page handout. At precinct meetings Ms. Dein has attended, there has been no significant push-back. People have asked for clarification about trees. Ms. Dein added it would be helpful and useful to have the CEFC vote to endorse the warrant article.

Ms Cooper added that MOF have contacted approximately half of Town Meeting members with emails. Ms. Cooper said when the CEFC discussed approving this warrant article initially, the Committee did not want to make a big push on a zoning article, but now that a lot of the work has already been done, we should consider voting today. David Morgan asked for clarification about the requirement for solar for roofs with less than 50% of roof space available. Is there still a requirement in the warrant article? Ms. Dein said the article is now written so that if there is insufficient roof space then there will be no requirement. The expectation is that this will be negotiated property by property. Ms. Dein added that warrant article 38 was more complicated and far reaching and warrant article 30 is more limited in scope.

Mr. Katofsky said he didn't see a reason for the CEFC not to support this. He added that the ARB is very thorough in evaluating measures and if they are satisfied with WA 30, the CEFC should be as well. Mr. Katofsky asked if a developer has the right to develop even if the building will shade an existing array – is that right? Ms. Dein confirmed this and said a solar owner can't block future development. In other words, people can develop by right. Mr. Levy stated he supports endorsing the article and thanked Ms. Dein and Mothers Out Front for all the work they have done. Mr. DiTullio said he is very supportive of the warrant article and asked if members of the CEFC remember if there was a substantive reason for not supporting the warrant article. Ms. Aikenhead said she thought the substantive discussion was around capital projects. Mr. Levy thought it was a resource issue rather than substantive. Ms. Dein also thought it was a capacity issue rather than substance. She added that the warrant article will affect 3-5 properties a year so it's not a controversial initiative. Ms. Cooper said she remembers the same. Mr. Katofsky made a motion for the CEFC to officially endorse the solar bylaw. Mr. Helmuth seconded the motion. The Committee voted to endorse warrant article 30.

Ms. Cooper noted there are gaps in outreach to TMMs and suggested the CEFC discuss closing outreach gaps. Not all TMMs are being contacted with emails and receiving the flyer that MOF prepared. Ms. Dein suggested the CEFC share the precinct list that indicates where there are gaps in outreach. Ms. Cooper said she would email the precincts where there are gaps after the meeting along with the current flyer for the article. Ms. Cooper thanked Ms. Dein for her considerable efforts on warrant article 30 to date.

3. Update on NZAP Implementation

Electric school buses – Ms. Fox gave an update. the Town has ordered chargers for buses. Chargers may not arrive before the fall given supply chain issues. Ms. Fox will be on a panel at the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) conference in May with individuals from Lexington and Concord talking about different models of electric school buses. Panelists will discuss purchase vs. service model of procurement. The Town will need to determine where to charge going forward since buses are currently parked on rented land. Ms. Dein said that it is important for the Town to secure a spot for the buses so that we can benefit from the bus batteries. The Town is not yet leveraging vehicle to grid technology, but if the Town could find a spot where multiple school buses could be parked there are financial benefits from vehicle to grid that could be taken advantage of. There is an opportunity for substantial savings with demand management. Concord and Beverly went with a service model.

Electrify Arlington (EA) – Ms. Fox stated EA is our high priority action. The working group has been working on development of the EA website. The workgroup has been talking to a number of organizations to understand options for the model of support to residents. Mr. Breslow said we will be meeting with HeatSmart Alliance. Our strategy of targeting a limited set of homes for a pilot (high cost heat, ducted systems) seems appropriate. Converting a gas home without ducting can be expensive right now. Ms. Cooper added that development of hydronic systems could make switching to heat pumps more cost effective. Mr. Katofsky said the targeted strategy makes sense but added he is seeing more mini-splits on homes that have steam heat. People are going ahead with installing heat pumps, so we shouldn't ignore that opportunity and should figure out how to help those people. We should also make sure they are using the systems for both heating and cooling, rather than relying on the gas system for heating. Ms. Aikenhead encouraged outreach to development community because there are a lot of new systems coming in and almost none of them are all-electric. It's possible developers don't know about the rebate. Ms. Cooper asked if we could develop an email list to the development community and materials to send to them. Mr. Katofsky said that when Arlington was getting ready to become a Green Community we did outreach to developers, had in-person meetings, answered questions, and prepared presentations. Ms. Cooper suggested we plan an information session like the one we held for Clean Heat. Ms. Dein said we will need to outreach to the development community around the opt-in stretch code which would be an appropriate time to do outreach to the development community.

ACE program update – Presentation to the Select Board was made on March 30th. Mr. Katofsky presented and a number of people spoke. There were a number of compelling and thoughtful comments. The goal is to get the default as high as we think is feasible, without causing people to opt out. The Select Board empowered the Town Manager to implement the change. Before now, we have matched on price, and this time we are going as high as we can without causing attrition from the program. Ms. Fox said there was an indicative pricing meeting with consultant Good Energy yesterday. Prices are shifting considerably right now. The Town will have to do outreach in the fall to describe price increases generally. The Town should be signing a contract within the next few weeks. Mr. Katofsky and Mr. Morgan suggested contracting directly with a renewable energy provider. Mr. Levy said there are people we could discuss this option with, and Ms. Fox asked Mr. Levy for contacts.

Stretch Code update – Bruce Moulton provided an update to the CEFC. The Clean Heat for Arlington website is live, and it has a lot of information on the true net zero stretch code resolution. MOF is sending the WA 73 flyer to Town Meeting Members. CEFC members who are doing outreach on WA 30 should also do outreach on WA 73. Coralie will send the spreadsheet and two flyers to the CEFC after this meeting.

Net Zero Buildings #8 in NZAP – The NZAP item states that the Town should review whether unnecessary barriers to energy efficiency and renewable energy exist in historic districts and if so whether changes should be made to design guidelines to reduce barriers. Ms. Fox is talking to the Chair of the Historic District Commission to establish a workgroup. Ms. Fox asked who from the CEFC would participate on the workgroup and assist in developing ways to reduce barriers in historic districts. Ms. Aikenhead said she has volunteered to be on the group. She added that the CEFC has to be sensitive to the needs and mandates of both groups (Historical Commission and Historic Districts Commission). Historical district restrictions are stricter than the historic inventory restrictions. Ms. Aikenhead stated that retrofitting can be done from the inside, which shouldn't trigger restrictions since these are largely for the outside of the building. Mr. Katofsky said it makes sense to find out what is feasible while at the same time maintaining historic buildings and districts. Mr. Levy asked if historic buildings can have solar panels and efficient windows installed. Ms. Aikenhead said there are already houses with panels and these are often placed on the front of houses. Mr. Levy said in the current climate crisis it doesn't make sense to preserve buildings built during a time of inequality when women and people of color didn't have rights. He said we should stop preserving these places in our history. Ms. Dein said that Marc also raised this issue and suggested we reach out to him as well. John DiModica, a member of the community, said he bought a property, not in a historic district but on the register, and they are not able to do a deep energy retrofit of the home because the Historical Commission has said it won't be allowed and the work won't be able to be done from the inside only.

Transition of Chair – Ms. Cooper said we are at the point of the year where we should transition the CEFC Chair and asked for folks interested in being Chair, please let Coralie know. There is no hard and fast rule for CEFC Chair, but we generally said when Ken Pruitt stepped down that the Chair term would be one year.

Other items – Ms. Dein stated there were a number of warrant articles that the CEFC did not consider endorsing this year and suggested that in the future we reach out to the community to find out about environmental warrant articles that we might want to support. Ms. Cooper suggested that in the March timeframe each year, the CEFC find out about other articles we may support.

Ms. Dein made a motion to adjourn, and Mr. Katofsky seconded the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30am.

Submitted by Coralie Cooper.