



Clean Energy Future Committee

Date: December 15, 2023

Time: 8:15 – 9:30 a.m.

Remote Format Meeting

Minutes

Attendance:

- Members Remote: Aimee Graeber, Amos Meeks, David Morgan, Eric Helmuth, James DiTullio (joined around 8:30), Jim Feeney (joined around 8:30), John Alessi, Nellie Aikenhead (joined @ 8:45am), Pasi Miettinen, Ryan Katofsky (as Chair), Shelly Dein, Talia Fox
- Members Absent: Marc Breslow
- Also attending: Gene Benson, Pat Hanlon

R. Katofsky convened the meeting at 8:15 am.

• **Virtual Meeting Reminders**

- If there is a technical failure, we will try to relaunch the meeting three times.
- If we are unable to relaunch and there are more than 20 minutes left in the meeting, the CEFC will reconvene the following Friday.
- If there are fewer than 20 minutes left, the CEFC will carry the remaining agenda items forward to the next meeting.

• **Review and Approve 10/27/2023 Meeting Minutes & Update**

- October 27, 2023 meeting minutes were reviewed and unanimously approved. CEFC will review November and December minutes at the January 2024 meeting.

1. **Fossil Fuel Free Demonstration Program (FFF Pilot) update – T. Fox**

DOER has approved Arlington for the FFF pilot with the condition that we get state approval for our MBTA Communities bylaw. As soon as that happens, we will receive an official letter of approval.

Arlington has also received a strong recommendation to refine the FFF Pilot bylaw language related to “major renovations” so it more closely reflects the state model. Our bylaw intentionally excludes additions and changes of use. However, DOER would like this modified. Whether or not the bylaw is modified, Arlington is eligible to participate in the Pilot.

The CEFC needs to review our minutes and determine what was promised to Town Meeting and then decide whether to return to TM to request something that is more restrictive. The Buildings Working Group will look into this and report back.

2. “Climate Leader Communities” (Climate Leaders) Program

The Commonwealth of MA is initiating a new program, which is similar to and will supplement the Green Communities Program, which Arlington has participated in since 2010. This new “Climate Leaders” phase offers new funding sources for participating communities and has been designed to align with current state goals.

There are six requirements communities must meet in order to participate in the Climate Leader program, including:

- Be a Green Community in good standing – DONE
- Create a CEFC or similar group to advise and take the lead on clean energy and climate activities (NOTE: technically the CEFC must include a school representative, so we need to find someone to fill that slot) – DONE
- Establish a municipal decarbonization commitment of eliminating onsite fossil fuel use by 2050 – DONE
- Create a roadmap for decarbonizing municipal operations with specific emissions reductions measures to reduce the use of onsite fossil fuels in buildings and vehicles by at least 25 percent by 2030
- Create a zero-emission-first vehicle policy
- Adopt Specialized Stretch code - DONE

In addition to what has been completed, we have completed sections of the other requirements. Municipalities must re-certify every three years.

There are different certification rounds. To participate in the first round, Arlington must submit all documents by the end of the 2024 Fiscal Year (6/30/2024). We would then be eligible for funding for various projects and initiatives.

Policy adoption does not require a TM vote. The Town Manager can approve but it would be best to present to the Select Board first. Policies must also be approved by the Arlington Public Schools.

It will be important to establish what is in the baseline measurements and what isn't. Will differ from Green Communities, which uses the original baseline established in 2008. We will instead use 2022 as baseline. We may need to adjust the baseline for change - for example the new High School vs. the old High School.

We don't know how much funding will be available or how will funds be allocated. Discussion has been about \$25k grants for studies and up to \$500k for actual projects, though the largest grants are atypical, and are often for multi-year endeavors. Green Communities started out with larger grants and as more communities joined, grants became smaller. If Climate Leaders will be similar, it might be worth hustling to make the June deadline.

T. Fox will look into whether PowerOptions, the group doing the ZEV evaluations (\$10k grant), could also help with building roadmap as well (\$40k in capital plan).

3. Sustainability Updates

Solar: R. Katofsky

The old high school had a 260 kW solar array, and that has been reinstalled by Ameresco on the completed Phase I portion of the new building. The Town tried to work with same company to add a second array but our contract (20-year power purchase agreement – PPA) didn't allow modifications, so instead we are working with a company called Select to design another 500 kW array, both on the building and on a canopy over the parking lot. The parking lot will be shared by the HS and public works; the canopy will be over the school's portion. We are working on sizing the arrays to maximize the state incentives by the end of the year. After that, we will be able to sign an letter of intent (LOI) with the installer. In total, there will be approximately 750KW on the site, and we expect that will meet one-quarter to one-third of the HS's energy needs. The Town is looking into a battery to work with the system, but the economics aren't too good.

Purchasing the solar arrays outright may be financially better for the Town. We can't do that for the HS, but the Town has put in a request to purchase them at the Bishop and Hardy schools. There are a few issues to work out. For example, maintenance is difficult for the Town to do in house and it's hard to find companies that will do it for a reasonable price.

The Town is also exploring the idea of creating a revolving fund to hold energy efficiency incentive money, so it does not have to be returned to the general fund. The incentive funds would then be readily available for future clean energy projects. This concept would have to be approved by Town Meeting.

Reminder: Specialized Stretch Code regulations take effect on January 1, 2024.

Remember to complete the MANDATORY conflict of interest training.

Sarah Suarez is Arlington's new Assistant Director of Planning & Community Development.

2023 was a great year! We passed two laws, put a stake in the ground on banning gas, and have made progress on some of the other Net Zero Action Plan items!

- **Next Meeting Date changed to January 19th**
 - A. Meeks moved to end the meeting and S. Dein seconded. Unanimous vote by show of hands.

Submitted by Nellie Aikenhead 1/16/2024