

**Climate Action Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 4, 2016, 6:00 p.m.
Brookline Town Hall, Room 111**

Members Present: Nancy Heller, Deborah Rivers, Michael Berger, Ben Chang, David Lescohier, Alan Leviton, Werner Lohe, Linda Olson Pehlke, Kathleen Scanlon, Don Weitzman
Staff: Lara Curtis Hayes, Maria Morelli, Alison Steinfeld
Others Present: John Harris, Tommy Vitolo, Ed Loechler, David Pantalone

Call to order, welcome and approval of minutes

Nancy Heller called the meeting to order.

Linda Olson Pehlke ***motioned to approve*** the minutes from February 22, 2016.

David Lescohier ***seconded*** the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion ***passed unanimously*** (7-0-2, Ben Chang and Nancy Heller abstaining).

Discuss and determine how to proceed with Community Choice Aggregation, including possible formation of a working subcommittee

Nancy Heller said it has become apparent that in order to move CCA along, it's important to have committee members who can work on this. Nancy said she'd like to appoint a subcommittee of CAC members, in particular Werner Lohe, Kathleen Scanlon, David Lescohier, Alan Leviton, and Don Weitzman, along with Tommy Vitolo and Carol Oldham.

Nancy encouraged members to get acquainted with the community choice aggregation issue. Nancy suggested an update could be scheduled for the CAC's May meeting.

The committee discussed the CAC's schedule going forward and when other public hearings could be held if the CAC wants to make other recommendations on warrant articles. Deborah Rivers asked if members could meet on 5/16. Lara Curtis Hayes or Maria Morelli will send a doodle poll to check members' availability for 5/16 or 5/23.

Lara Curtis Hayes discussed with the CAC the details around the MAPC procurement for aggregation, the open meeting law requirements, and timing going forward. Lara urged committee members to contact Maria Morelli for assistance with posting and other staffing needs. Nancy Heller thanked Lara for her contributions and welcomed Maria to the committee.

Public Hearing on Proposed Town Meeting Warrant Article:

Article 21: A Resolution Affirming Brookline's Commitment to Solar Electricity (Photovoltaics) (*submitted by Citizen Petitioner John Harris*)

John Harris introduced the resolution, noting that the letter to the state legislature earlier this year that was recommended by the Climate Action Committee and signed by the Selectmen inspired this warrant article. John said the state legislature may move on the net metering issue earlier than originally expected.

John reviewed the different statements put forth by the resolution, explaining the background behind them. John said Rutland, Vermont, and Boothbay Harbor, Maine, are considering microgrids. John said he has been working with David Pantalone on the wording of the resolution. John said it has become clear that those in the state who do not want solar electricity, including those motivated by oil and gas money and the utilities, may allow net metering but won't enable fair market rates, and the issue gets complicated quickly. John said there are 12,000 to 15,000 jobs in the solar industry that are at stake. Nancy Heller said adding a whereas statement regarding jobs might not be possible, depending on the moderator's opinion.

Nancy asked if there were any questions from the committee. Linda Olson Pehlke said she understands that all of the issues listed in the whereas statements are necessary to have a robust solar market, but questioned whether they would all be included in one piece of legislation. John Harris said not necessarily, they could be in different legislative bills. Linda said the original intent was to tell the legislature and governor to do something positive regarding solar, not necessarily include issues like microgrids. John agreed, but thought they were all related to legislative activity or needed legislation.

Linda asked if there were any thoughts about how to achieve the 6th whereas statement regarding social equity. John said he has arranged for explanation material from a couple of experts regarding that goal. David Lescohier said Community Shared Solar not mounted on your own property would be subject to property tax, which could be an issue related to that statement. Werner Lohe said the provision is trying to attract attention to the issue of social equity, which could be addressed in multiple ways. Werner said the issue is complex, and reviewed some examples. Alan Leviton said the whereas statement might be too specific for what the goal really is. The committee discussed wording and said the term "incentives" would be better than "tax credits." Linda and David Lescohier talked about the solar loan program, which has some incentives for low-income households.

David Pantalone said it is important that incentives not be just related to tax credits, because if you don't have tax liability then you need a refund in order to get the benefit. The committee continued to discuss appropriate wording and tax credits. Nancy Heller said the wording of the sixth whereas statement should be revised to include at the end "incentives, including making tax credits refundable."

Alan asked about the third whereas statement, regarding fair value for net metering credits. John Harris said there has been a lot of debate regarding the appropriate value for net metering credits, and whether it should be the retail rate. The committee discussed the costs for electricity and net metering.

Don Weitzman questioned the use of the phrasing "the People of Brookline insist," instead of "Town Meeting" or more typical language, near the end of the resolution. John Harris said that was similar to feedback from the Selectmen, which inserted "Town Meeting" in the first sentence and replaced "insist" with "strongly encourage." Linda said that sentence should be expanded beyond just Brookline, as we care about the energy mix of multiple municipalities. Nancy said the way it's phrased, it supports it both for the town and the legislation for the entire state. The committee continued to discuss and make recommendations on the wording of the resolution. John Harris suggested more state representatives be added and some of the federal officials be removed from the cc list.

David Lescohier motioned to **recommend favorable action on the resolution as amended**.

Werner Lohe **seconded** the motion.

On a vote, the motion **passed** unanimously, (10-0).

Review and discuss the warrant for Spring Town Meeting and determine whether additional public hearings should be held to formulate recommendations

Nancy Heller said some committee members have expressed interest in holding public hearings on warrant articles 11 and 12.

Lara Curtis Hayes reviewed Article 11 generally, noting that it is similar in wording to another bylaw that was drafted in 2001-2003.

Deborah Rivers said it does have a climate impact because it increases the tree cover in town, so it might make sense for the CAC to take a position.

Deborah said she feels similarly to Article 12, that it might relate to climate as well because it could increase the amount of space for landscaping. The committee continued to discuss whether they should hold public hearings on the articles. Werner Lohe said it could be positive for the climate, but it could also be really complicated.

Michael Berger said the articles could be positive, but they might also not have that great of an impact. Don Weitzman said it could be helpful to just say the climate impacts should be thought of when considering these warrant articles but not take a formal position.

Linda Olson Pehlke noted that we have an action item in the Climate Action Plan about planting additional trees, so Nancy said she agrees with Linda and Deborah that it might be important to hold a public hearing, if only to educate the public.

Nancy asked for committee members to indicate whether they think the CAC should hold a public hearing on article 11. Eight members were in favor of a hearing, 1 opposed, and Ben Chang abstained.

Nancy asked for committee members to indicate whether they think the CAC should hold a public hearing on article 12. The committee discussed side yard setback requirements and how they affect development. Michael Berger said the CAC is stronger when it saves its opinion for the issues that matter, and we should be careful about diminishing our power.

Nancy said she is concerned that the CAC doesn't have the time to review this issue. Nancy said this issue has much less impact than the tree preservation article. Don said he agrees with Michael's opinion, and while the tree article could positively affect climate goals, the side yard setback article's impacts are much less clear. Deborah Rivers said all of the zoning needs to be looked at again with a climate perspective.

Nancy asked again for committee members to indicate whether they think the CAC should hold a public hearing on article 12. One member was in favor of a hearing, and 9 were opposed.

Updates on other current and planned Climate Action Committee projects and areas of interest

Nancy gave an update on Complete Streets, which was presented to the Selectmen, but a vote has not been held so that some questions on the policy can be resolved by Town Counsel. Nancy said she thinks the policy will come back before the Selectmen soon.

David Lescohier updated the committee on the net metering debate at the state legislature. David said a number of mayors signed a letter supporting net metering legislation, and a number of representatives

have taken public positions in favor of positive net metering legislation, contrary to the Speaker's position, which is significant. David said he expects to hear some legislative developments very soon. Alan Leviton asked for clarification on what type of community shared solar projects would be supported in the legislation. David reviewed the legislation as it is currently being proposed.

Alan Leviton said the next CAC meeting will include a presentation on Cambridge Net Zero, and he will be sending out documents ahead of time for the CAC to review.

Linda Olson Pehlke said she would like to quantify what's happened since the committee's beginning since we've done so much, including Green Community grant projects, Solarize Mass, etc. Lara Curtis Hayes said that sounds a lot like an updated greenhouse gas inventory. Alan Leviton said the last GHG inventory we did was with 2008 data, but we might be able to review specific programs and how effective they are. Linda said we might be able to evaluate the impacts of specific programs and projects, which might be easier.

Nancy asked if anyone knows of any sort of community shared wind power. David Lescohier said that would probably require state legislation. David Pantalone said that's kind of like Mass Energy. Nancy said she is discouraged that only 200+ households have signed up for Mass Energy's all-renewable electricity program. The CAC discussed possible reasons why it wasn't more of a success.

Updates from staff, including review of upcoming Green Community grant

Lara Curtis Hayes updated the CAC on the Green Communities competitive grant and municipal solar projects. Lara said Maria Morelli will be taking over the Northeastern vulnerability assessment project through the AGU.

Alison Steinfeld said Maria Morelli will be providing the transition to the staff until Lara's position is filled.

Other business

Next meeting for the CAC will be Monday, April 25th, starting at 6:00 p.m., and it will focus on Cambridge's Net Zero initiative.

Meeting adjourned.