

LEBANON ENERGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Council Chambers, City Hall

December 16, 2021

4:00 PM

FINAL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Clifton Below (Chair, Council Representative), Greg Ames (Vice-Chair), Jon Chaffee, Woody Rothe, Joan Monroe (Planning Board Representative), Gene Homicki (alternate, remote), Devin Wilkie (Alternate Council Representative, remote)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Meghan Butts

STAFF PRESENT: Everett Hammond, Tad Montgomery

GUESTS PRESENT: None

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order by Clifton Below at 4:03 PM. Gene confirmed it was not practical for him to attend in person. Clifton appointed Gene Homicki to serve in place of the Meghan Butts.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Jon moved to accept the 10/21/2021 minutes (November LEAC meeting was cancelled); Woody seconded. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

OLD BUSINESS

Lebanon Community Power, Community Power Coalition of NH & Related Legislative and Regulatory updates

1. Clifton mentioned that on 12/1, the approved Lebanon Community Power plan was submitted to the PUC for 60-day approval period. Clifton pointed out the updated electric load/usage information that he had received from Liberty Utilities and added to the LCP plan
2. Clifton gave an update on CPCNH – Hudson and Webster were admitted today, bringing the total percentage of the state population served by member communities to 17.8%. CPCHN has retained legal counsel that has agreed to operate “at risk”, i.e., not billing until CPCNH begins to generate revenue. Risk Management and Member Operations and Engagement subcommittees are very active. Several towns are also gearing up to join after Town Meeting in March.
3. A (bipartisan) Senate bill is being introduced to enable direct producer to consumer sales of power from limited producers.

4. Clifton discussed the PUC's cuts to NH energy efficiency programs/NHSaves. The Dept of Energy has issued a letter in opposition to the cuts, as has the Governor. The NH Business and Industry Association filed a letter with the PUC protesting the order to cut funding for NHSaves.

Update on Landfill Gas to Energy Project & Solar

1. The City Council approved funding. The interconnect agreement is almost complete. The re-installation of solar at the Landfill has been delayed until the interconnect agreement is complete.

NEW BUSINESS

Discuss planning for development of a City Climate Action Plan:

Woody and Jon received a collection of documents from Mark Goodwin, consisting of various community's climate action plans, along with the "Carbon-Free City Handbook" from the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI). Woody has asked Mark to add them to LEAC's SharePoint folder. Woody pointed out several highlights:

1. Cambridge, MA's plan addresses multi-family and low-income housing. Not on track for carbon-neutral by 2050.
2. Amherst, MA's plan discusses multi-family housing and PACE funding, and energy star portfolio manager software.
3. Rocky Mountain Institute estimates a need to reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2030
4. Some zoning boards are beginning to focus on building emissions.
5. Keene is developing a climate action plan which will be added to their Master Plan. Keene is focusing on building energy benchmarks, and is considering voluntary building energy disclosures for sales and rentals.
6. Flagstaff, AZ has a good term definition section. City has declared a climate emergency and is considering targeting retrofitting 50% of buildings by 2030. Has also discussed financing for lower-income residents.
7. Boston's plan discussed future growth plans (85% of floor space to be built already has been built). All new affordable housing is to be net zero. Energy and water usage reports will be required by all large buildings. Not on track for carbon-neutral by 2050.
8. RMI discusses owner vs tenant incentives, which may not be aligned (for instance, if the tenant pays the energy bills).
9. DOE zero-energy-ready home program.
10. Ann Arbor, MI wants to be carbon-neutral by 2030 and created an information website. Also bulk buying batteries.
11. New Bedford, MA has the largest solar site, measured by per-capita metrics.
12. 2014 DOE sea-level rise study (Houston, Miami, Boston, New York).
13. Studies showing tracking of building energy usage results in lowering of energy usage.
14. Cambridge, Summerville, and Boston are working on zero net carbon stretch goals and are considering zoning requirements.
15. Providence, RI – energy audits, sustainability evaluation tool, climate equity.

16. Fort Collins, CO used RMI to put together a climate action plan. Fort Collins is a part owner of the local electric utility that phased out of 2 of 3 coal-fired plants.
17. Several plans discuss that these goals are good for job growth and business.
18. Portland, OR plan has good graphics on trends/goals. Also, carbon budgets/planning.
19. Tacoma, WA has zero-interest loans for retrofits to homeowners, up to 100k.
20. Summerville, MA has 7 plug-in vehicle charging stations. Exploring licensing of rental property that would require energy disclosures to renters.
21. 65%+ of carbon emissions are from buildings.
22. Efficiency Maine (and others) has a program to lower heat pump costs.

Jon pointed out that several plans focus on improving energy efficiency in building codes. Discussion of what are the increased building costs for these higher efficiency buildings and capital expenses vs operational expenses and the impacts on total housing costs.

The Committee discussed to prospects of developing a City-wide climate action plan. Mark discussed the Master Plan update process, and allocation of a “champion” for updates of each section/chapter of the Master Plan.

Joan suggested encouraging “cross-pollination” of boards, with representatives of LEAC, Planning, and Conservation serving on each other’s boards.

Upcoming conference or webinars of note: None.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: None.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: None.

NEXT MEETING:

Next LEAC meeting scheduled for Thursday, January 20th at 4pm.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Joan to adjourn the meeting at 6:21 PM. The motion was seconded by Greg. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Gregory Ames