

Wellfleet Energy and Climate Action Committee

Minutes for 16 February 2023

Remote Participation

Present: Suzanne Ryan-Ishkanian (Chair), Lilli-Ann Green (Vice-Chair), Carol Magenau (Secretary), Gorham Brigham (alternate, acting as member), Dick Elkin, David Mead-Fox, Robert Shapiro

Guest: Ronit Goldstein, Eversource Community Relations and Economic Development Specialist

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ryan-Ishkanian at 7:17 PM.

The meeting was recorded.

BUSINESS

Approval of minutes Motion: Moved by Green, seconded by Elkin, minutes for 19 January were approved with amendments requested by Elkin and Green, by roll call vote 7-0-0.

Presentation Our guest Ronit Goldstein shared information about Eversource projects. She serves as a conduit to the company from communities on Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard, and works closely with public safety officials. A microgrid has been in place for North Wellfleet since the end of 2022. It is a battery energy storage system ("BESS"), first of its kind for Eversource and in the country, and unusual for a microgrid in relying solely on battery power. In spring of 2019 Eversource installed a pad-mounted transformer near Wellfleet Town Hall. These are being installed in several Cape towns and serve as sub-stations. This installation enabled Eversource to eliminate equipment at the Gull Pond sub-station which was struck by lightning a few years back. Engineers have also reconfigured the infrastructure connecting the downtown area and the pier to help with peak demand in summer. Large transmission structures in the right-of-way parallel to Route 6 from Orleans to Wellfleet have been replaced with more up-to-date structures.

Reliability and clean energy (including modernizing the grid to accept renewable power sources) are the two overarching goals for the company currently.

We watched a video about the "BESS" that was installed in Provincetown and serves the outer Cape (Provincetown to North Wellfleet). It was deployed in May and has been used at least twice so far to cover outages.

Goldstein answered questions from committee members. Shapiro asked about outages within the National Seashore, which owns the infrastructure, so Eversource no longer fixes it according to Goldstein though they may have done so in the past. Green asked what the plans are to increase grid capacity. A new transmission line is being installed to increase transmission to the Cape and is expected to connect with Vineyard Wind; siting projects is a challenge. Elkin asked whether Cape customers would be paying for infrastructure built to serve transmission to other states. Green asked about whether poles could be buried to decrease vulnerability. Goldstein said this is a frequent question, but other utilities (Verizon, for instance) also use the poles so usually Eversource can't make a unilateral decision. Elkin asked about time-of-use meters for residences; Goldstein said that Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) has been approved by the Dept. of Public Utilities, and she expects this to be implemented over the next couple of years, including related infrastructure and billing procedures.

Goldstein took several questions away for further research, and left the meeting with our thanks.

Electric Car Show Mead-Fox reported that planning was going smoothly.

Opt-in Stretch Code Mead-Fox reported that the Selectboard voted 3-2 to have the opt-in stretch code on the warrant for spring town meeting. Education is being planned for three groups: builders, residents, and business owners. A session is planned for builders in the first half of March. Both Green Communities Division and DOER [Dept. of Energy Resources] are coming up with training materials for municipalities. Ryan-Ishkanian asked if we should be concerned about the negative Selectboard votes. Mead-Fox responded that the concerns raised were that it was too soon to make such a complex decision, and a lack of trust in air-source technology. A discussion ensued on the importance of addressing doubts about heat pumps, including the extent to which the technology is improving, the importance of insulation, and the proper sizing of the installation.

Global Covenant of Mayors Shortly before the meeting Shapiro had distributed an update to committee members, which gives the schedule for reporting for 2022. Shapiro will let others know if they need to supply information for the questionnaire.

Grants Ryan-Ishkanian reported that a submission was made through ATA Rebecca Roughley for a DLTA [District Local Technical Assistance] grant for help from the Cape Cod Commission with the initial stages of compiling a Climate Action Plan. It was one of two proposals submitted for Wellfleet. Ryan-Ishkanian will distribute what was submitted to committee members.

Shapiro left the meeting.

Future agenda topics Mead-Fox suggested three topics relating to the IRA [Inflation Reduction Act]
-direct pay concept (instead of a tax credit)
-commercial clean vehicle credit for non-profits, including municipalities
-document explaining the IRA from the National League of Cities
He will send out information for committee members to review for a discussion at the next meeting.

New business The next meeting will be held remotely on Thursday 16 March at 7:15 PM.

Motion to adjourn was made by Green, seconded by Elkin, passed 6-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol [Mary C.] Magenau, Secretary