

AVON CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
December 15, 2021

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairman Zahren via GoToMeeting. Members present: Bernie Zahren, William Shea, Don Phelan, Charles Harvell, Richard Kretz and Melissa Firestone. Member absent: Christine Winter. Advisory member absent: Johnathan Craig. Staff member present: Grace Tiezzi, Assistant Town Manager.

II. APPROVAL OF THE PRECEDING MEETING MINUTES – August 18, 2021

Mr. Zahren made edits to the minutes as follows:

Page 2, sixth paragraph, second sentence, change “Mr. Tiezzi” to “Ms. Tiezzi” and add “the state of retail” to the end of the sentence.

Mr. Shea made a motion to approve the August 18, 2021 minutes as amended. Mr. Harvell seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

III. COMMUNICATION FROM AUDIENCE – There was none.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Connecticut Green Bank Solar Marketplace Assistance Program (MAP)

Ms. Tiezzi stated that she continues to work with Susan Russo from the Board of Education, as well as the Green Bank while they finalize their price proposal to the Town. There are still some items to work out and review. She stated that the Clean Energy Commission can hold a special meeting in January, if needed, to review what will be brought forward. This will allow time to ensure that staff is comfortable with what they will be recommending to this Commission and ultimately to the Town Council and the Board of Education.

Mr. Zahren stated that he is comfortable that this is a very good program. If the Town gets approval for the power purchase agreements, he would suggest that they move forward.

Electric Vehicle Charging Station RFP

Mr. Zahren stated that the legislation that is being proposed in the Build Back Better Plan, is to fund 500,000 charging stations. This would be great if it passes, although then the big issue would be where they would get installed. He believes that installation would be concentrated along the interstate highway networks.

Ms. Tiezzi thanked Mr. Harvell and Mr. Phelan for meeting with her; they had a very productive subcommittee meeting. They discussed many avenues and what would be best for the Town of Avon.

Ms. Tiezzi stated that there is a proposal in its infancy that may in time be presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission to consider amending the Zoning Regulations to require the installation of EV charging stations. She is unsure of what the parameters would be, although Hiram Peck should be bringing it forward in the new year. She feels that this may be the most effective way to build their infrastructure in Town.

Mr. Phelan stated that although he and Charles support this, they want to make sure that the economics are such that people who are using the stations are the ones that are actually paying for them. He feels that this Commission should, as much as possible, promote EV charging stations and to help with the Zoning Regulations so these can get installed. Mr. Zahren agreed and stated that he feels the trend toward charging stations are popular with companies now and housing units will soon follow suit because this is what people want. He stated that the measure in Congress is only a start to what the country will ultimately need.

Sustainable CT Update

Mr. Shea stated that through Ms. Tiezzi's leadership, the Town has made incredible strides obtaining the bronze designation. She is leading all of the department heads in this effort as well as interacting on a direct basis with Sustainable CT. As the Town was moving forward to the silver designation, they hit several hurdles. This program has been temporarily stalled. He feels that Sustainable CT needs to make some corrections and make it easier for Towns to work with them.

Ms. Tiezzi stated that Sustainable CT releases new changes to the program at the beginning of every calendar year. These changes were already on their website in a lengthy PowerPoint presentation with many little changes for 2022. She stated that she will go through this list when time allows. They will then do their best to regroup the sustainability team and try to move forward.

Mr. Zahren asked Anagha, a student from Avon High School, if there was currently a Green Club or the equivalent at the high school. Anagha stated that they currently have a Climate Action Club, which she is President of; the school also has a Sierra Club. Mr. Zahren stated that if either of the clubs are interested in having a member of this Commission come and talk to them, they would be happy to do that.

Approve 2022 Meeting Schedule

Mr. Zahren stated that the 2022 meeting schedule continues to be every other month with regular meetings being held in February, April, June, August, October and December.

Mr. Phelan made a motion to approve the 2022 meeting schedule as presented. Mr. Kretz seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zahren urged the Commission members to continue to read and watch things that are happening in the world relating to environmental issues.

Mr. Kretz suggested setting one of the Commission's goals for 2022 to see what they can do as a Town, bringing environmental issues down to a local level. He stated that the biggest development that is going on in Town is the Town Center. He suggested that they think of things they can do as a Town to encourage a sustainability element, being either a microgrid or solar panels. He stated that this is the

biggest opportunity they have as a Town to do something from a clean energy standpoint. Mr. Zahren stated that when the Town Center developer comes back for a building permit to start the second phase, there is still supposed to be a proposal for a microgrid.

Mr. Zahren questioned what was happening with the residential piece of the Town Center project. Ms. Tiezzi stated that the idea behind each of the phases is that the development is supposed to build up with a little bit of commercial and retail as well as a bit of residential. It is not supposed to be that all of the commercial or residential gets built up all at once. She stated that the first phase has been approved to include both commercial and residential.

Mr. Zahren stated that as part of the residential piece in phase one, if an apartment building was going to be constructed, this Commission could urge the developer to put solar on the roof or something to that affect.

Mr. Zahren stated that there is a new initiative nationally called a zero-energy building. He stated that it is one step up from the old LEED qualifications. This initiative says that not only does the building have to put all of these sustainability features in, they have to continuously monitor it and report that it is actually working in order to keep the certification.

V. ADJOURN

Mr. Harvell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 p.m. Mr. Phelan seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted:
Chairman Bernard Zahren

Attest: Alison Sturgeon, Clerk