DRAFT

AVON CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION
AVON ROOM BLDG. #1 TOWN HALL
MINUTES
AUGUST 24, 2016

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Bernard Zahren in the Avon Room, Building 1 Town Hall. Members present: Chairman Bernard Zahren, Richard Kretz, Marty Kaplan, Joseph Gentile and new member Don Phelan. Member absent: Jeffrey Macel. Advisory member present: Jonathan Craig. Staff members Town Clerk Ann Dearstyne and Director of Planning & Community Development Hiram Peck were also in attendance.

II. APPROVAL OF THE PRECEDING MEETING MINUTES – June 15th

Mr. Zahren requested the word "crowd" in section IV be changed to "Commission."
VOTE: Mr. Kretz motioned, Mr. Phelan seconded and all agreed to accept the June 15th, 2016 minutes with the change. None opposed. Mr. Gentile came in late and missed the vote.

III. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE

None.

IV. OLD BUSINESS: a. Avon Village Center update – Hiram Peck, b. Update on study of micro grid

Mr. Zahren referred to the previous minutes where he attended the Town Council's May meeting, announcing the results of our energy goals that we want to publicize as well as the new solar installations on the two schools, asking the BOE and the Superintendent of Schools to draft a release. He continued that Mr. Mala said he would do one but he wanted to wait until school started and added there'd been a whole year of production with the solar PV. Mr. Kaplan inquired if we had a qualified statement of the numbers we're saving each month. Mr. Craig said there is a way to measure each installation's output information that is available on line and each installation has its own metric. Mr. Kaplan asked further if the information had been formatted for the dashboard and was it all done. Mr. Zahren said he couldn't say and they had a new person as the facilities manager and was assured he was getting on top of all these things. Mr. Zahren continued that information was right there on the inverter and couldn't speak to what the school is actually recording. Mr. Craig noted that there should be a monitoring station in each school also which should be in a display case. Ms. Dearstyne noted that she didn't know if the schools were doing that. Mr. Kaplan added that it is something that should be taken care of. Mr. Zahren noted that these were financed through SolarCity and not the Green Bank. Mr. Kaplan asked if we send a monthly or semi-annual statement. Mr. Craig noted that Clean Communities required an annual report. Mr. Zahren continued that we'd have to ask and noted that we did do all the things we were supposed to do to get another 100 points under the point system and added that Mr. Robertson had identified another $10,000 grant under another program which he noted the funding had since probably closed down. Mr. Craig questioned if the Clean Communities program provided any funding to which Mr. Zahren said SolarCity uses its own private funding.

He continued SolarCity uses the tax credits and sells the SRECs. Mr. Craig said then SolarCity should be able to give us a report. Mr. Zahren noted that we were promised an education component but he was told they were not operating in the state currently and had moved off to someplace else. Mr. Zahren noted that the town is doing the reporting but not the schools. Mr. Kaplan asked if they were using an EPA format to which Mr. Zahren said he didn't know what the schools were using. Mr. Zahren turned the meeting over to Mr. Peck.

Mr. Peck began that the first item was the update on the Village Center. Mr. Peck reminded of last November's meeting, the P & Z Commission approved a new master plan, a sketch of what the Center would look like. The decision the Commission agreed upon at that time was ten pages with specifics with regard to allocation of commercial uses, the number of residential uses, open space, preservation of the existing brownstone and the retention of the Arts Center component. He continued that a number of things has happened since then with the applicant coming back in with a plan for Phase 1A which had to do with paring a portion of the property: the back of the town office complex with Climax Road on the west, Bickford Road on the north and Rt. 44 on the south. Mr. Peck continued that this portion of land (Phase 1A) was approved for earth removal in order to prepare it for development. He noted the amount of removal was a source of significant discussion when the Commission looked at this. Mr. Peck said he went back to the 2012 plan and the topographic information on that plan really indicated that there would have to be a significant amount of excavation take place in order to make it happen. He added the Commission members were surprised when there really wasn't that much of a difference in the two plans. Mr. Peck said the material is composed of some good sands and gravels and other debris and the developer is currently working with Dunning Sand & Gravel to determine how much they'll pay to remove that material to see what the net is and so on. He noted that there were two other parcels of land on the west side of Climax directly and on the other side abutting the MDC water line easement to Bickford Extension. This was originally proposed for excavation as well but was determined through staff, developer and architectural and engineering peer consultants meetings that they didn't need to do that now. So in lieu of 250,000 yards of material being excavated, the Commission agreed to the removal of approximately 160,000 yards. He continued that this excavation will prepare the site for the first phase of development. Mr. Peck and the Commission were told that we could expect to see the detailed site plans for that parcel in September or October. He noted that we'd probably see them October at the earliest and suggested to the developer that we'd really like to see the plan before they get in front of the Commission to sift through a lot of the issues with the town staff and then get that plan to the Commission in one or two meetings instead of five or six, that looks good and is approvable. Mr. Peck added that we were able to get the funding for the architect and engineer peer reviews from the developer and are in good shape with that funding and he hopes it will last for a while.

Mr. Kaplan asked if this was costing the town anything. Mr. Peck said just staff time and added they have put $30,000 into a peer review account and that it is carefully watched by the town engineer and himself so they can be honest with the developer. He added that he provides a monthly report to them as well.

Mr. Zahren asked if Patrick Pinnell was a part of the consulting team. Mr. Peck said the head of the team is Amenta Emma Architects out of Harford. He continued that Mr. Pinnell is an

architect from Higganum and noted the landscape architect as Shavaun Towers who used to be a principal in Towers Golde, an architectural firm in the Saybrook area. Mr. Peck added that there is some very good talent on the team and they "get it" that we are trying to create a village here, not a West Hartford or Shoppes at the Valley or Collinsville, but something special here that we can really be proud of. Mr. Kaplan asked if anyone in the group was green oriented. Mr. Peck said absolutely, every single one of them. He continued that we have been very clear what we want emphasized – the microgrid, other low impact development, storm water, using permeable paving and low impact lighting. He added that when they come in with the plan in October we'll see if they heard us.

Mr. Zahren asked what part the Phase 1A represented relative to the conceptual total 1.2 million square feet. Mr. Peck said he didn't know, and the developer was hunting tenants right now and the total allowable square footage of a building is at approximately 46,000sf. Mr. Zahren asked if they were looking for a super market because that is what they've heard. Mr. Peck said he didn't know and said there were pros and cons to that.

Mr. Kaplan asked if there were power lines coming in. Mr. Peck said he didn't know the details on it yet and the engineering firm was Weston and Sampson out of Rocky Hill. Mr. Peck reminded that when the site plan comes in they will be looking at all the infrastructure: power, water, sewer, gas and roads as well and that is an important part of that review. Mr. Craig asked if they were selecting underground for it saying it would be ideal lacking bedrock to deal with. Mr. Peck noted they promised the Fire Marshal they would sprinkler the buildings, a significant expense but they did agree to it. Mr. Peck reiterated that he has had conversations with Mr. Robertson, the Chamber that if the plans come back not what they expect then he has no problem recommending that it not go forward. He assured that we're really going to get it right and good and if not he couldn't live with himself professionally. He asked would every single person love it he didn't know but we're going to get it right so the majority of people will say yeah, that's special.

Mr. Craig asked how many stories they were limited to. Mr. Peck said as high as three noting that some of the topography is really steep and would not be surprised if they came to them with a unique stepped design that could get as high as four. He added that he'd rather see that than take out another half million yards and have the place look like Kansas.

Mr. Zahren asked if there was anything specific other than the microgrid that we should think about or look at or interface with. Mr. Peck said he was sure that as soon as they got something on a piece of paper that they'd have the Commission look at it to comment on and would be happy to do that. Mr. Kaplan asked how the various facilities would face to consider solar at some point in time. Mr. Gentile noted that they did speak about solar in some of the meetings. Mr. Peck said even orientation of the buildings could get 14% additional out of a south facing solar and how we work overhangs and window shades can be interesting.

Mr. Phelan asked if this phase was going to be retail or residential. Mr. Peck said both and mixing residential and commercial and within the buildings, vertical mixing as well. Mr. Phelan continued with asking where the residential would target income levels. Mr. Peck said that was not clear with the developer yet but he'd like to see some percentage of it to be attainable so that

people could afford to live there. He continued that he didn't want to call it affordable as he didn't want to get that in the press or make people upset but frankly if you look at the area median income with young folks today needing an apartment willing to live above a coffee shop then that would be a good thing to have, get more people on the street after dark walking through the various parks and using the area when there are small concerts or whatever. Mr. Craig asked about elderly. Mr. Peck said he thinks the same things and should be plenty of places that are single story flats or whatever they happen to be so that elderly folks have good access, even mobile folks, continuing he'd like to see a variety of housing products, some single family development, duplexes, triplexes and then some multiplexes that will have more than 2, 3 units, so a real mix. Mr. Peck added that currently residential rentals are doing extremely well and young people are going to places like Detroit because they are affordable and sees that once they get their problems worked out those cities will come back.

Mr. Zahren asked Mr. Phelan what he is seeing with mixing affordable with market rent things. Mr. Phelan said it happens all the time and most big developments include some level of affordable housing often mandated whereby the developer subsidizes sometimes by contributing the land for free. Mr. Zahren noted that Mr. Phelan is an expert in that field. Mr. Peck noted that they'll be talking about this thing and the percentages are not terribly high 10, 20 or 15% of the structures and you never tell the units apart. He added that it creates a vitality and people need jobs and that's a great way to do it.

Mr. Zahren asked about school aged children and where would they go. Mr. Peck said that there are so few school kids per unit basis that even many school systems around the state have anywhere from 500 – 700 empty seats right now. Mr. Peck continued that many people are concerned about the impact on the schools but the reality is we have a lot of space. Mr. Gentile disagreed that enrollment was larger than they thought. Ms. Dearstyne noted at least in our area. Mr. Peck noted the units were not going to be like the mountain and would be smaller units, some a little bit larger, some single family homes, not the 3-5,000sf. or 10,000sf. places you'd find on the mountain.

Mr. Kaplan asked about the bike paths. Mr. Peck said it would run through the center and the East Coast Greenway people have been involved from the beginning and the police will be happy to have it out of their parking lot, making it safer. Mr. Peck noted that they would like to break ground next spring if on schedule.

Mr. Zahren asked Mr. Kretz to report on the microgrid. Mr. Kretz said unfortunately there hasn't been a lot of progress. He spoke to Pace Energy and Climate Center, having had Karl Rabago pass him off to others: Tom Bourgeois, Beka Kosanovic and Lakshmi Rahul and who would be willing to come to talk to the Commission. Mr. Zahren asked if he had a better sense of what they provide or their approach. Mr. Kretz got a good feel that what you're trying to find is exactly what they provide. Mr. Peck said the developer is aware and has met with him and has agreed to take a hard look at this but they still need to define the details and who pays for what. Mr. Kretz continued that they told him they know where the resources are and where you need to go. Mr. Zahren reminded of the recent event in Louisiana where they received a year's worth of rain in less than a week and how quickly we forget Sandy and the late October snowstorm and how dependent we are on the big grid which is not reliable and sustainable in the long run and

why the microgrid could provide our own electricity and a little cheaper but that it could provide critical services to the town as a backup for this community that they plan to build, the ability to generate your own power independent of a grid. Mr. Kretz referred to an article that put the cost to build a microgrid anywhere from $250,000 and $100,000,000 – a good range. Mr. Kretz said they have about 30 projects they've completed: NYU, Wesleyan, Ontario, UMASS Med Center, Princeton, Helsinki, and Co-op City in New York.

Mr. Phelan asked what it would look like. Mr. Zahren said we'd make electricity and thermal energy, heat energy making power but not all of it to manage the peak hours of the day and hopefully cheaper than what we pay the utility, harness the heat energy lost in the exhaust in a heat exchanger to heat or cool the buildings, perhaps tie it into solar panels on the buildings that would not just serve that one building. Mr. Craig suggested with LEDs and other types of digital electronics we could go to DC wiring which is cheaper and doesn't go through an inverter saving about 12 – 15%. Mr. Zahren suggested geothermal as an adjunct to all this as well.

V. NEW BUSINESS: a. Concept of Sustainability in Plan of Conservation and Development – Hiram Peck, b. Clean Energy Commission draft of revised Charge

Mr. Peck noted a draft of the POCD had just been sent to the Planning and Zoning members. He distributed a May 26, 2016 submission for a sustainability award to the members to review the chapter by chapter references to sustainability. He mentioned a few: natural resources, open space and recreation, housing, transportation, business and industry. He continued that when he spoke to the former Planner about the plan he wanted to include a chapter on sustainability but decided to talk about it as we went along in each chapter. He welcomed the members to review the plan, that it was still a draft and they could make comments or recommendations. Hopefully, he'll go to the Commission in October and get an approval for the final plan. Mr. Peck noted that the town was not selected for the award.

Mr. Kaplan asked Mr. Peck if he had seen the energy use plan done with the consultant Peregrine. Mr. Peck said no he had not and would check with Mr. Kushner and feel free to email him with any comments. Mr. Peck added that he had seen many sustainability plans in the state and felt most were lip service and hoped this one would be substantive. Ms. Dearstyne and Mr. Zahren thanked Mr. Peck for his presentation.

Mr. Zahren discussed the revised charge draft. He began with a history of the Commission's charge beginning with the December 4, 2008 issued by the Town Council which eventually led to the development of the Comprehensive Energy Management Plan as adopted in 2012 which set the goal of reducing energy use on per square foot of usable space on a BTU common denominator between gas and oil and electricity, finishing the plan at the end of last year hoping for a press release to tout this in reducing overall usage in comparable square footage facilities at 18%, beating the goal of 15%.

Mr. Zahren read the four main topics of the revised charge: 1) continue to pursue the goals as identified in the Comprehensive Energy Management Plan as adopted in 2012 and work with Town Staff to identify and recommend additional goals that should be added to the Plan, 2) work with Town Staff to identify clean energy opportunities involving the Avon Village Center Development, 3) the Committee shall identify new clean energy technology opportunities that

show promise of being compatible and useful to the Town of Avon and its residents, 4) the Committee shall continue to provide periodic reviews and reports to the Town Council as necessary and upon request. Mr. Zahren noted that it was a very open ended thing leaving it up to us to come up with what we think is feasible, harder too because we've done a lot of the low hanging fruit. He continued that Mr. Kaplan has been talking about going after transportation for years when we've gone after energy use in the buildings instead. He continued that street lighting has been successful in other towns but we don't even know who owns these in Avon. Mr. Zahren noted number two that he'd like to continue work involving the new Village Center and extend the message to the residents to how they can be more sustainable. He was disappointed with the solar program. Mr. Zahren referred to number 3 noting that we are about to undergo an entire revolution in this country citing turning the smart house into a total energy responsive system where you could control it from your iPhone or all sorts of sources, an electric self-driving car, adding Eversource is not a leader in the smart grid.

Mr. Zahren would like to add some things to the draft: 1) Avon has signed up as a participant in the CT Clean Communities program so the Commission will help monitor and achieve some of the goals we have committed to, 2) how do we reach out more to town residents and schools to implement educational objectives of sustainability, and 3) advocate at the State level for policies that enhance our ability to achieve greater sustainability. Ms. Dearstyne volunteered to take these additional changes to Mr. Robertson for the draft revision.

Mr. Zahren reminded of the value of attending outreach meetings sponsored by the Clean Communities program. He noted the towns that survived the initial enthusiasm and subsequent fade with clean energy task committees have begun to seriously address this sort of thing, also noting the efforts of Melissa Everett to pull these meetings together. Mr. Zahren said there is another meeting coming up around the 20th of September on a Saturday which he hopes members will attend. Mr. Zahren distributed an article referencing an English village touting their sustainability efforts.

Mr. Zahren requested the minutes reflect the loss of great champions for sustainability Judi and Lou Friedman who passed away recently. Ms. Friedman was formerly the Chairperson for People's Action for Clean Energy.

Mr. Zahren asked Mr. Gentile for his thoughts. Mr. Gentile noted the Avon Village Center project. He said he's anticipating the developer's response to sustainability and the solar. Mr. Zahren asked him about the style of the façade of the buildings. Mr. Gentile said he could not answer for the Commission but there were some members who'd like it to look the way Avon used to look, a Victorian, colonial look. Mr. Peck agreed and continued that what we'd end up with would be a blend of architecture which would be compatible and coordinated, not everything looking the same. He is also hoping the developers will come back with things that are helpful like windows that really work, energy efficient as opposed to the least expensive ones they can put in, same with roofing, siding. The larger structures designed to keep water on the roofs longer, and energy efficient ponding perhaps, they'll have to look carefully at the plan. Mr. Craig suggested a green roof. Mr. Peck told of a marketplace he'd seen recently that had a greenhouse on top of it with the produce selling in the store. Mr. Zahren offered they're very

limited because water and soil are very heavy and would require extra support and expense to go to a stronger roof. Mr. Kaplan cautioned against a flat roof especially in the northeast.

Mr. Gentile asked if there was information available on the developer's work done in Rhode Island especially with regard to energy efficiency. Mr. Peck offered that he didn't think they've paid any attention to it there and he'd like it to be state of the art compared to what they'd done years ago. Mr. Gentile cautioned that you can mention it but that you cannot hold their feet to it. Mr. Kretz asked where their motivation was. Mr. Peck said time is money, if they bring something to the Commission that they like, then they can get things done more quickly. Mr. Gentile said too as far as the energy costs go if the owners were picking it up they wouldn't care how efficient it was but if it was included in their rent they'd pay more attention. Mr. Peck added that the microgrid could be a tremendous marketing tool wooing clients with cheaper energy costs. Mr. Kaplan offered that was the way they did it in Farmington Woods, dollars and cents.

Mr. Peck noted the developer will keep the project once it is complete which will also help because of the long term impact on their energy costs. Mr. Kretz asked if that's their track record – build and hold. Mr. Peck said yes. Mr. Zahren said it will cost more up front but you will save more money in the long run the more sustainable. Mr. Kretz noted an uninterrupted grid would also provide incentive to one running a business.

VI. ADJOURN

VOTE: Mr. Kaplan motioned, Mr. Kretz seconded and all agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:15PM. None opposed.

Respectfully submitted:
Chairman Bernard Zahren

Attest: Susan Gatcomb, Clerk