

**AVON CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION  
AVON ROOM BLDG. #1 TOWN HALL  
MINUTES  
JUNE 21, 2017**

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chairman Bernard Zahren in the Avon Room, Building 1, Town Hall. Members present: Chairman Bernard Zahren, Don Phelan, William Shea and Richard Kretz. Members absent: Joseph Gentile and Jeffrey Macel. Advisory member absent: Jonathan Craig. Staff members Grace Tiezzi, Assistant to the Town Manager and Ann Dearstyne, Town Clerk were also in attendance.

II. APPROVAL OF THE PRECEDING MEETING MINUTES – April 19, 2017

**VOTE:** Mr. Phelan made a motion to approve the April 19, 2017 minutes as amended by Mr. Zahren. Mr. Kretz seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

III. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE

None.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Solar City Presentation

Ms. Tiezzi introduced Brent Eskay, Senior Project Development Manager at Tesla, previously Solar City. Mr. Eskay made a presentation to the Commission members regarding the solar performance of the solar arrays at Avon High School, Avon Middle School and the Department of Public Works, as included in these minutes.

Progress Report on Eversource Campaign

Ms. Tiezzi stated that a letter regarding the Eversource Home Energy Solutions program, which was reviewed by this Commission at their last meeting, was sent out in May. She stated that representatives from Eversource came to the Avon library on May 9<sup>th</sup>, at which 14 people attended; seven of those people signed up for the energy audit. There was also a lunch and learn for seniors at the Senior Center on May 26<sup>th</sup>, at which 28 people attended; seven people signed up for the energy audit and all others took applications home with them. Ms. Tiezzi stated that 51 homes in Avon have already completed the Home Energy Solutions audit since January 2017. This initiative will continue until the end of 2017 at which time Eversource will give the Town a final report. She stated that once this initiative is complete, Eversource will help the Town of Avon with reaching out to others in Town, possibly working with the Chamber of Commerce in terms of businesses in Town, or possibly working with the schools in conjunction with the Board of Education.

Mr. Zahren questioned if Eversource had any comments on how Avon's rate of sign up compared to other Towns of similar size. Ms. Tiezzi stated that Eversource did not comment, although they did consider the 14 people who attended the meeting at the library as an excellent turnout.

Mr. Zahren stated that he and Jeff Macel attended an information session where the speaker was Commissioner Robert Klee of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. He stated that the meeting was somewhat overshadowed because of the State's budget issues; the State budget has not yet been passed. There are risks involving the State budget not being passed, but further concerns are what is happening on a federal level. Commissioner Klee is not currently able to hire any new people and there are approximately 50 people coming up for retirement within the next 12 months. Because of

this, some long running State programs and services may not be able to continue. Regarding earlier negotiations on the State budget, Mr. Zahren stated that the Governor's plan was to take money from the Energy Efficiency Fund, which is what funds energy audits like the one Avon is currently running, as well as the Green Bank, which is how initiatives like putting solar on houses and other things are financed. He stated that there are serious concerns that the legislature will try to take from the Energy Efficiency Fund; if they do, Avon's energy audit initiative could run out of money. Mr. Zahren stated that if there is any way this Commission can urge residents to look at getting the audit done sooner rather than later, it would be helpful. Currently, there is money in the fund to cover these audits, but there are no guarantees as to how long funds will be available.

Ms. Tiezzi stated that Alison from Eversource talked about having a Town of Avon official complete the energy audit then doing a press release to promote it. She will talk to Alison and Samantha at Eversource for other suggestions as well.

#### Micro Grid Status Update

Ms. Tiezzi stated that the Town released the RFP on May 17th. The Town will be working with Murtha Culina as well as their consultant ECG. They are the ones that have drafted the RFP and have done the advertising; these firms are running most everything associated with this. She stated that a mandatory site walk for proposers was held on May 31st. This was a requirement for every vendor that was going to apply to the RFP. There were 24 firms that attended the site walk, although 32 firms had initially requested the RFP. Ms. Tiezzi stated that representatives from the Engineering and Planning Departments, as well as the Deputy Director of Public Works also attended the site walk. Proposals are due by June 30, 2017. After all of the RFPs come in to ECG, the Town will work with Murtha Culina to review the proposals as well as discuss the next steps.

Mr. Zahren questioned of the 24 firms that were on the site walk, if there was any sense as to how many proposals the Town hopes to receive. Ms. Tiezzi stated that although they are unsure, they were told not to anticipate all of the 24 firms to bid. Mr. Kretz questioned what the size of the power generation unit would be. Ms. Tiezzi stated that they did not take any oral questions on the day of the site walk, although firms could submit questions in writing. Since the site walk, the Town has put out one addendum and they may need to put out another one as well. In response to Mr. Kretz's question, Ms. Tiezzi stated that she did not see any questions regarding the size of the unit. Mr. Kretz questioned if there was any discussion regarding the possibility of the new development. Ms. Tiezzi stated that this was mentioned on the site walk, although not discussed.

Mr. Zahren questioned if the RFP specified the load that would be covered if the grid went down. Ms. Tiezzi stated that it did not; the Town is looking for firms to make their own suggestions. Electric bills, reports out of Facility Dude, as well as the size of generators at the Police Station and at Company 1 were provided in the RFP. Ms. Tiezzi stated that the firms were given a lot of supplemental information, although the size was not stated. It will be up to the proposers to tell the Town what they think we will need. Mr. Zahren questioned if the RFP specified where it should be located. Ms. Tiezzi stated that, again, the proposers need to suggest the location.

Mr. Zahren stated that the Town is requesting bids in hopes of getting the right data to then get the grant; the grant is subject to available funds. Ms. Tiezzi stated that this would be bond funding, which has already been approved by the Bond Commission. These are not operating funds and cannot be used to balance the State budget. Mr. Zahren stated that there is a sense that one of the things that hinders the micro grids is that the utility relies on it as a distributed generator that will contribute to the grid. In order to be assured that the Town has the reliability factor needed, they require the design to be 120% of what the Town expects to use on a regular basis. He stated that this raises the cost and risks that it may not be economical. There are some ways around this, such as the Town could build a generator and if it is on Town property, the Town could sell energy to a neighbor. Ms. Tiezzi questioned if this could still be done if the Town does not own the system. Mr. Zahren stated that he believes it can be done; there are exceptions for municipal micro grids. He stated that the Town should revisit the bids once they come in to

see what options they do have. The Town has been thinking in terms of building a bigger one to serve the new Town Center. If it was an incremental amount and the Town could sell the power, the Town would make money. Another option is that it could go to the return to cover the costs of the facility. Mr. Zahren questioned if there was any mention of thermal energy in any of the material given out with the RFP. Ms. Tiezzi stated that there was no mention in anything that the Town put out regarding what they would or would not consider. She stated that what is presented to the Town in the proposals may not be the final product that goes to the grant application. There is room for further development and learning on both sides. Just because it is packaged in the RFP does not mean that it will go to DEEP in the grant application.

Mr. Zahren stated that the State is more than a year behind on updating the Comprehensive Energy Strategy (CES). This is a summary of, as the State, how they will meet the mandates they set years ago to reduce emissions. He stated that Commissioner Klee promised that they are working on the updated CES, which will be available soon.

Mr. Zahren stated that several northeast states as well as California are the only states that have penalties in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions on generators. He stated that they have the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) in the northeast. There are a lot of arguments in terms of not allowing new natural gas pipelines; if they are not allowed, new generators cannot be built because there will not be enough capacity. Mr. Zahren stated that Mr. Robertson wrote a letter back in March of 2017, in terms of being in favor of many of these pieces of legislation, none of which passed. He stated that this should be concerning to everyone because it will filter down to Towns. He believes it is important to try and follow this legislation and support what they can. Mr. Shea stated that this Commission needs to stay true to their mission in order to be most effective, no matter what the State decides to do.

Mr. Kretz stated that he read an article regarding single stream recycling. He stated that because glass is being mixed with cardboards and plastics, it diminishes the value of the recycling. Single stream recycling started because people get lazy as well as to boost up the amount of people who recycle. He questioned if Avon could request to go back to the bins that separate out the waste in order to possibly see a reduction in their fees. Mr. Zahren stated that they could be even more aggressive and segregate out combustible things. This would be an effort that creates a usable fuel. Ms. Tiezzi stated that the Town currently contracts Paine's for recycling. Mr. Shea stated that this Commission could reach out and dovetail with Simsbury through the Farmington Valley Collaborative to talk about what Paine's might be willing to do to help Avon, which would not affect the company's bottom line. Mr. Kretz stated that they should discuss this issue with Mr. Robertson as well as with Michael Paine.

Mr. Zahren stated that the Town of Simsbury has proposed the largest single solar farm in the State. Mr. Shea stated that some residents have been raising legitimate questions. Mr. Zahren stated that the legislature did pass restrictions on using farmland for solar farms. Simsbury has already applied although the new law does not go into effect until July 1st; Simsbury may be grandfathered in. He stated that he would like to see the solar farm built. Mr. Shea stated that although he is in favor of the solar panels, at the same time he would like to see a buffer or shield for the neighbors.

Mr. Phelan questioned what the State is doing with the Paris Accord. Mr. Zahren stated that there is a coalition of states and cities that are doing their own initiatives. He stated that Avon is a part of this because they are trying to reduce their own carbon footprint.

Mr. Zahren stated that Mr. Kaplan has resigned from this Commission. He suggested appointing Mr. Kaplan as a member emeritus. Ms. Tiezzi stated that she has mentioned this to Ms. Dearstyne and will discuss it with her further. She stated that the Council needs to formally accept Mr. Kaplan's resignation. They could appoint a new member at the same time, if they are ready to do so. Mr. Shea stated that Christine Winter has expressed interest in being on this Commission; she comes highly recommended.

Mr. Zahren questioned why the Avon Clean Energy Commission is not listed as a Town Commission in the annual report. Ms. Tiezzi stated that she would look into this.

V. NEW BUSINESS

None.

VI. ADJOURN

**VOTE:** Mr. Shea made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20. Mr. Kretz seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted:  
Chairman Bernard Zahren

Attest: Alison Sturgeon, Clerk