

AVON CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
March 15, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairperson Firestone in the Avon Room at the Avon Town Offices. Members present: Bernie Zahren, Carrie Firestone, Michael Dawson, Daniel Carvalho and Michael Guerrero. Student Member Present: Anagha Bhumireddy. Members absent: Christine Winter and Kim Stevenson. Staff Member Present: Grace Tiezzi, Assistant Town Manager.

II. APPROVAL OF THE PRECEDING MINUTES

On a motion from Mr. Zahren and a second from Mr. Guerrero, the minutes of the January 15, 2023 meeting were unanimously approved.

On a motion from Mr. Guerrero and a second from Mr. Zahren, the minutes of the March 1, 2023 special meeting were unanimously approved.

III. COMMUNICATION FROM THE AUDIENCE

None

IV. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION

None

V. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Green Up! Avon Sustainability Initiative – Presentation from Aiello Home Services

Chairperson Firestone introduced Michael Murray, Supervisor of Aiello Home Services' Home Energy Department to provide an overview of the Home Energy Solutions (HES) Audit program and to discuss how the Commission could partner with Aiello and other HES contractors to bring the program to Avon residents this summer.

Mr. Murray provided an overview of his background and work experience and walked the Commission through the HES process. Each audit is conducted by two technicians. They focus on health and safety first by checking the house for CO issues, gas leaks, mold and asbestos. Absent these hazards, the audit can proceed. If these hazards are identified the audit will need to pause until the issues are mitigated by experts. Next, the technicians conduct a blower door test, a diagnostic tool to determine how much air is entering and escaping the home. Based on the results of this test, the technicians go to work to seal cracks, caulk around windows, install door sweeps, and other measures. Once this work is complete the test is done again to determine your energy savings. The audit concludes with a kitchen table wrap up with the occupant and the technicians to go over the work that was done, the savings achieved and present any additional projects that the occupant could undertake at a future date to reap more savings. The audit also

qualifies the occupant for rebates on insulation, appliances and windows that are not available to the general public.

The HES program costs \$50 to the occupant (renters can participate with the permission of the property owner). There is also an HES income eligible program that is free to qualified individuals. This is essentially an administrative fee. The balance of the cost to implement the weather proofing measures is borne by the utility. The program is funded by a fee on utility payers bills.

Mr. Murray explained why people are having such a hard time scheduling home energy audits currently and why Chairperson Firestone had to call multiple contractors before she found someone willing and able to partner with the Town. Briefly, the program is funded by the utility on a three year basis. The utility overspent in year one of the program so they are unable to provide appropriate levels of funding in the later years. Additionally, in 2017, the state legislature swept the state's clean energy fund and never restored the funding as was promised. Additionally, recently the state required homeowners that wished to install solar panels to obtain an audit prior to installation. All of these factors have resulted in increased demand for services without enough funding in place. As a result, people are waiting months for a service that should be completed within thirty days.

Mr. Murray explained that there are currently several initiatives occurring at the state legislature to provide additional funding for this program. The first is Senate Bill 4, Section 21 which would provide \$200 million in grants through DEEP for energy efficiency improvements in multifamily residences and affordable rental units. This should reduce the burden on the existing program and provide and provide funding for those that need it most.

Chairperson Firestone thanked Mr. Murray for all the information he shared with the Commission and asked what Aiello and the Town could do to make it easier for residents to obtain this service. Mr. Murray stated that he will be able to dedicate one crew to Avon beginning in July and August to complete audits for one to two homes per day. He was also trying to find additional contractors to provide income eligible audits and to provide additional funding for CNG heating customers in Town. He will work with the Town to develop a marketing flyer that will need to be reviewed by Energize CT. He will work with the customers to arrange the audit to fit their schedule so if July and August do not work, he can schedule them for the fall.

The Commission and Mr. Murry also discussed putting together information on rebates that are available to customers without the audit.

On a motion from Chairperson Firestone and a second from Mr. Dawson, the Commission unanimously voted to partner with Aiello Home Services to bring the Home Energy Solutions program to Avon residents.

Ms. Tiezzi stated that Chairperson Firestone will be coming to the March 30th Town Council meeting to provide the Council with an update on the Commission's activities.

b. Sustainable Investing Program

Chairperson Firestone was able to book the Library Community Room for Thursday May 18th at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Zahren continues to develop his program on this topic and has determined that the program will be best presented by an expert panel. The Commission will discuss marketing at its April Meeting

c. Ongoing Project Updates

Ms. Tiezzi provided updates on the following projects:

CT Green Bank Solar Marketplace Assistance Program –Verogy is preparing to submit applications to Planning & Zoning by the end of March.

EV Charging Stations – We expect to hear from DEEP on the status of our grant application within the next two weeks.

Town-wide Energy Plan – This work continues to progress. Brandon reviewed the draft, and it is currently with PACE for some help with the data. Next, it will be presented to the Commission for feedback and assistance with goal setting.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

None

VII. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Chairperson Carrie Firestone

Attest: Grace Tiezzi, Assistant Town Manager