

AVON CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 19, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:09pm by Chairperson Firestone in the Selectman's Chamber at the Avon Town Offices. Members Present: Bernie Zahren, Carrie Firestone, Christine Winter, Kim Stevenson, Michael Guerrero. Student Member Present: Anagha Bhumireddy. Members Absent: Michael Dawson, Daniel Carvalho. Staff Member Present: Grace Tiezzi, Assistant Town Manager.

II. APPROVAL OF THE PRECEEDING MINUTES

On a motion from Chairperson Firestone and a second from Ms. Winter, the minutes of the March 15, 2023 meeting were unanimously approved.

III. COMMUNICATION FROM AUDIENCE

None

IV. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION

The commission agreed to discuss Ms. Winter's questions from the March 15, 2023 meeting regarding the presentation by Mr. Murray, Supervisor of Aiello Home Services' Home Energy Department. Ms. Winter questioned if the HES program changes out light bulbs anymore. The commission responded that they no longer provide LED light bulbs as part of the program. Mr. Zahren commented that Eversource used to fund that part of the program and they have since cut funding. Ms. Winter also inquired about the money allocated for Avon home audits. Chairperson Firestone stated that Mr. Murray had the money set aside. Ms. Winter asked if there had been any discussion about adding the philanthropic piece back in, or what can be done to effectively market to Avon residents. Chairperson Firestone and the commission stated that being the topic tonight's meeting.

V. OLD BUSINESS

a. Sustainability Investing Program

Mr. Zahren provided an update that the agenda is being finalized, a presentation is being developed to captivate their audience, and a jazz band performance has been added to break up the monotony. Mr. Zahren asked Ms. Tiezzi about the status of the press release. Ms. Tiezzi stated that she wanted to address the commission to discuss how the event should be marketed. Ms. Tiezzi stated she would like to get the press release to The Valley Press, published on the Town's website, social media, and provide hard copies for the library and senior center. Chairperson Firestone asked about the Town mailer. Mr. Tiezzi stated her office is getting a quote for a double-sided mailer. Ms. Winter asked about advertising to surrounding towns. The commission agreed advertising to neighboring towns was a good idea. Ms. Tiezzi stated she will run off copies and when ready, members can pick them up to distribute. Ms. Winter suggested the flyer be edited to include what ESG stands for. Mr. Zahren stated ESG stands for Environmental, Social, and Governance. The commission agreed that ESG needed to be spelled out and Ms. Tiezzi stated she did not want to scare people off with certain terms within the flyer. Chairperson Firestone reminded Mr. Zahren to provide brief bios. Mr. Zahren stated Ms. Tiezzi had already included bios. Mr. Zahren inquired about materials to hand out to attendees. Chairperson Firestone suggested not providing anything more than a one-page, bullet-pointed handout. Ms. Tiezzi stated that the presentation slides can be uploaded to the commission's webpage. Ms. Stevenson suggested that the most important thing that can come out of this event is to provide a clear path for people to act. Chairperson Firestone stated some people need a breakdown of risk and reward as there are

many people that are investment averse. Mr. Zahren commented that his goal was to provide the audience with investment options to leave a legacy for generations to come. Mr. Guerrero commented about the alignment of carbon credits, but Mr. Zahren stated the carbon credit program never truly panned out. Ms. Stevenson stated that she met with a Fidelity advisor who claimed that ESG funds are performing equal to or better than the more traditional funds and the industry is evolving. Mr. Guerrero stated when he was with The Hartford, they committed a certain percentage to sustainability. Mr. Zahren provided 12 states have adopted a new policy mandating state pension plans should not be guided by sustainability. Mr. Guerrero commented that a solid takeaway from this event would be people going to their financial advisors to inquire about how to invest responsibly. Chairperson Firestone suggested the commission wrap up the discussion. Ms. Tiezzi stated that if Mr. Zahren was good with the edits for the flyer, then she could add it to the town's website, social media, and direct invitations. In addition, Mr. Tiezzi noted that as the event is to be held Thursday, May 18th, the commission should decide if they want to cancel the May 17th meeting in lieu of the Sustainability Investing Program event. The commission agreed to cancel the May 17th meeting.

b. Green Up! Avon Sustainability Initiative

Chairperson Firestone stated that everyone needs to spread the word about getting friends and neighbors onboard with the Energize CT assessments. They have to call the number, give the Green Up Avon code, and they schedule a date. Chairperson Firestone suggested door knocking and Ms. Winter agreed to do some as well. Ms. Tiezzi stated she would be able to provide a list, or Engineering could provide a list of names and addresses. Mr. Guerrero stated his neighborhood has a Facebook page where he can post. Ms. Tiezzi provided the Town of Avon's website Assessor's list is available to everyone. Chairperson Firestone suggested Buckingham as a good neighborhood to get the word out, and Ms. Bhumireddy lives in that area. Ms. Bhumireddy stated she does bake sales every summer with her neighbors, so they already know her and she could get the word out. Ms. Stevenson stated that older neighborhoods might be better for door knocking because they are biggest energy hogs. Ms. Tiezzi stated she has a report from 1997 on older homes catalogued in the Town of Avon. Ms. Tiezzi stated the flyer is being quoted by Goulet Printery in Canton, and Aiello will probably want branding. Ms. Tiezzi noted that Chairperson Firestone is needed to finalize the dates for the back of the flyer. Ms. Tiezzi stated once the flyer is complete, copies will be provided to the commission for distribution and door-knocking. Chairperson Firestone stated Chris Grasser from the Avon Land Trust will be doing a sub-edge trail walk to look at invasives on May 6th at 10am. Ms. Grasser will be educating people on what to look for and how to pull invasives properly. Chairperson Firestone stated another event coming up is the No Mow May and in other towns people are getting lawn signs. Chairperson Firestone asked Ms. Tiezzi if a link could be added to Facebook for people to buy No Mow May lawn signs. Ms. Tiezzi agreed. Chairperson Firestone stated that for the Tallamy Book event, the children's book has come out, Nature's Best Hope. Chairperson Firestone suggested letting people know about this community book talk event with Doug Tallamy so people can get the book and start reading it together. Ms. Tiezzi asked if there was a date for this event. Chairperson Firestone stated that Tina may know the date. Ms. Tiezzi stated she would ask Tina. Chairperson Firestone inquired about an update on the concert situation. Ms. Tiezzi stated she proposed the idea to Brandon Robertson, Town Manager. Due to concerns about garbage, bathrooms, staff, etc., the consensus was there is not capacity for Recreation or the commission. Ms. Tiezzi stated that Recreation already has a summer concert and perhaps the commission could piggy-back on other events that are already scheduled so that resources can be allocated such as a table for the commission to share handouts and speak to the public in attendance. Ms. Tiezzi suggested the commission reach out to Recreation in the fall or early winter to plan for 2024 summer programs. Chairperson Firestone stated that Home by Ten agreed to do a free concert, so it might work to include their band at the fall pumpkin carving event. The commission agreed.

c. Ongoing Project Updates

i. CT Green Bank Solar Marketplace Assistance Program

Ms. Tiezzi provided an update that solar panels are ticking along at Avon High School and Roaring Brook. They are hoping to meet with the company in the next couple weeks to discuss construction logistics and look at the completed drawings for submission to Planning & Zoning for local permits hopefully by May.

ii. EV Charging Stations

Ms. Tiezzi stated she is still waiting to hear from DEEP about the status of the EV charging station grant application. The application was submitted in September and the continual response from DEEP is two more weeks.

iii. Town-wide Energy Plan

Ms. Tiezzi stated she has a call with Bernie Pelletier on Friday. Mr. Pelletier and Mark went through the draft and did a lot of work on the data set and calculations. Ms. Tiezzi stated Mr. Pelletier will walk her through his suggestions. Ms. Tiezzi noted to Chairperson Firestone about making a donation to P.A.C.E when the project is complete because all of the work has been done pro-bono. Ms. Tiezzi stated that Brandon Robertson, Town Manager, agreed that was a good idea. Ms. Tiezzi stated the next step would be to bring it to the commission at the June meeting to review the document as a group, work on some goal-setting, and then once finalized it can be brought to the Town Council to review and accept as well as approve the request for a donation. Chairperson Firestone stated that she will be away for the June Meeting, so she would like to review the items beforehand and perhaps Ms. Winter can share at the meeting.

iv. Air Source Heat Pump Projects

Ms. Tiezzi stated that there are two capital projects going on for renovations at Countryside Park, and the Historic School House. The Historic School House will be turned into a museum dedicated to Avon's history with a focus on the Paleo Indian site. Terry Wilson has put together a ton of grant money for the projects. Ms. Tiezzi stated both project scopes include new HVAC systems so Public Works has been working with the Town's HVAC contractor and they have identified that these projects would be appropriate for air source heat pumps. Bruce Williams, Director of Public Works, has been working with Eversource and between the two projects, the Town will be receiving about \$14,000 in rebates to implement to heat pump projects. Ms. Tiezzi stated the Senior Center also needs a new HVAC system, so it might be a good application there as well. Ms. Winter questioned what the insulation was like at the buildings. Ms. Tiezzi stated insulation is being added to the Historic School House and both projects will receive a facelift.

VI. NEW BUSINESS - None

VII. ADJOURN

Mr. Guerrero motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:33pm. Mr. Zahren seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted:
Chairperson Carrie Firestone

Attest: Nicole Chambers, ACEC Clerk