

**AVON CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION
AVON ROOM BLDG. #1 TOWN HALL
MINUTES
June 20, 2018**

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Bernard Zahren in the Selectmen's Chambers, Building 1, Town Hall. Members present: Chairman Bernard Zahren, Don Phelan, William Shea, Christine Winter and Richard Kretz. Members absent: Venkata Anupaju and Jeffrey Macel. Advisory member present: Jonathan Craig. Staff member present: Grace Tiezzi, Assistant to the Town Manager.

II. APPROVAL OF THE PRECEDING MEETING MINUTES – April 18, 2018

Page 2, 1st paragraph, 3rd line, change “2010” to “2015.”

Mr. Phelan made a motion to approve the April 18, 2018 minutes as amended. Mr. Shea seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

III. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE – None.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Discussion: Multi-Town Initiative

Ms. Winter stated that the multi-town initiative group decided to focus on the energy tracking software that many towns are using. They are looking to see if some of the towns could come together and cooperate on upgrading or getting new systems for their towns. She stated that this was a very interesting discussion. The staff member in West Hartford has been working with a system, although she would not recommend the current system they are using; many of these companies separate the board of education functions from the town functions in terms of not computing them in the same way. Ms. Winter stated that the Town of Bloomfield is interested in working on this as well. Ms. Tiezzi stated that Avon's Public Works Department is satisfied with what is currently in place. They are currently using Facility Dude, which is the software that Avon uses to input data on a monthly basis for each of their utilities. There are many reports that can be run from Facility Dude; the data is there for what they might need. Ms. Winter stated that West Hartford has found many errors with regard to their billing, which is affecting their bottom line; they are looking for something to help them reduce this risk.

Ms. Tiezzi stated that the Town of West Hartford has a third party who directly receives their utility bills and inputs them into the system and pays them on behalf of the town. She stated that Avon does their own billing, which is functional for this town. Ms. Winter stated that Farmington and Canton were not at this group meeting, however, Canton has expressed interest in this topic as well. The multi-town initiative is looking at towns working together to negotiate rates as a group rather than individually. She believes it would make sense for Avon to look into this as well to see if it could benefit the town in some way.

Mr. Zahren stated that the software for Facility Dude is used by the town although the Board of Education does something separate. The BOE uses much more energy than the rest of the town facilities; data is needed from the Board of Education. Mr. Phelan stated that this information should be able to be gotten from Eversource as well as CNG. Ms. Tiezzi stated that in the past, the town has requested information on electricity use from Eversource, but because of the rate schedule the town is on, they do not keep that data. She is unsure if CNG would be able to give them this type of information as well. Ms. Winter stated that the Town of Bloomfield is trying to look at patterns not just for use, but combining this with other information such as the temperature; this combination of data would be more useful. In terms of billing, Mr. Shea stated that it would not be hard to consolidate the town side with the Board of Education side.

Mr. Zahren stated that this Commission made a pledge through the Clean Communities to report the town's use; without the Board of Education's information, they only have a part of the picture. He stated that the Town Manager was going to ask to coordinate with their Facilities Manager to get this data. Ms. Tiezzi stated the BOE was tracking their electricity usage and determined that it would not be cost effective for them to purchase a similar software package like Facility Dude.

Mr. Phelan suggested having one spokesperson for all of the towns in the initiative who could go to Eversource and ask for the needed information in a certain format. Mr. Shea stated that he does not believe that Avon can work with other towns within the multi-town initiative until both the town side and BOE in Avon can work together.

Mr. Zahren suggested going back to the Town Manager to ask him where his inquiry to the Board of Education ended up. This Commission represents the whole town including the BOE facilities. There was a consensus among the Commission members that they see a need to have consistent and accurate reporting of all town usage. He stated that he and Mr. Kretz have been researching systems that help reduce peak loads when there is a very hot or very cold day. He stated that he would be curious to know how many of the town's meters have demand charges on them. When a meter hits a new maximum use, it sets a new peak demand. Eversource is entitled to charge a surcharge for that peak demand for the whole year. Mr. Kretz volunteered to discuss this issue with the Town Manager.

Ms. Winter stated that the next multi-town meeting will probably be sometime in September. Mr. Shea stated that he is hopeful that the two sides of Avon can coordinate their efforts prior to that September meeting. Ms. Winter stated that there is a brand new superintendent in Town, so this may help. Mr. Kretz stated that they should also investigate getting student interns for this Commission to help with this issue. Ms. Winters suggested asking the Board of Education to send a liaison to all future ACEC meetings as well.

Ms. Winter stated that the multi-town group also had a discussion about Sustainable Connecticut. She stated that the Town of Bloomfield would like to participate in this, although they would need a designated coordinator that could devote their time to this project. They are in the initial stages of exploring this topic. Ms. Winter stated that the application and questionnaire to start the process does not take much time to complete, although the next step of tracking the commitments that each department would make in order to reach their goals would take a greater time commitment.

Ms. Winter made a suggestion at the multi-town meeting to have a joint presentation from 100% Sustainable; the Towns of Bloomfield and West Hartford have already had this presentation. Although the group did like the idea of joint presentations going forward, this particular presentation would probably not be the one to do since some have already heard it. She stated that Bernie Pelletier would be happy to do this presentation for Avon and any other town jointly, possibly at an upcoming Commission meeting. This could also be opened up to other departments or commissions in town as well. Mr. Shea stated that unless this Commission has specific goals to accomplish from any presentations, he does not feel there would be much benefit to participating in this with other towns. He stated that the Commission members need to determine what their goals are for the next multi-town meeting. If they decide to participate in a presentation, they should first determine what they would get out of the presentation and what they might do with the learned information. A foundation needs to be set for the benefit of education and knowledge. He does not feel that they have sustainable goals and structure in place, which would be needed for something positive to come out of joining group presentations.

Ms. Winter stated that although she agrees with Mr. Shea, she feels that this Commission could benefit by being more organized in terms of where this Commission came from and where they are headed, as well as some goals. She suggests that the Commission members use the month of July to review the Town's POCD and the history of this Commission in order to make some goals that could be discussed at the August meeting to map out a plan for the year with some concrete goals.

Ms. Tiezzi stated that she also believes it would be good for the Commission members to take an opportunity to go through certain Town documents to see what has been accomplished by this Commission and what is still outstanding. She stated that town staff relies on commission members in terms of experience to help guide them with projects that the town may pursue. She stated that after reviewing these documents, a discussion by this Commission will lend its way with what Avon does or does not do with other communities. Ms. Tiezzi stated that she will send out the Commission's Charge as well as the Energy Plan and Assessment and POCD with the applicable sections noted.

Mr. Shea stated that he does not want the time spent by the Commission members to read these documents and discuss them at the next meeting if they are not able to do what they want to do at the most simple level, which would also prevent this Commission from effectively participating in the multi-town initiative. Although he understands that this Commission needs to discuss their short and long term goals, he requested that Ms. Tiezzi send out an email listing the short term goals of this Commission for the next 60 days. One of those goals should be the Town and the Board of Education working together on the administrative aspect of gathering the necessary utility data, as well as other short term goals.

The Commission members had a discussion regarding storm water management. Mr. Shea and Ms. Winter disagreed in terms of if this topic was under the purview of this Commission. Mr. Zahren questioned what this Commission is mandated to comply with under this stormwater management permit. Ms. Tiezzi stated that the ms4 permit is a multi-year effort with a lot of components to it. Within the timeframe of this year, this would not be something for the Commission members to work on; the Engineering Department will be working on this. She stated that all of the town's outfalls need to be mapped; anywhere stormwater collects will need to be identified. She stated that there are also public education aspects to this as well. This will be a multi-year process until all requirements are met. Mr. Zahren agreed with Ms. Winter that this topic is outside of this Commission's purview.

Mr. Phelan suggested that this Commission review their Charge and spend a bit of time on it at the next meeting in order to get some initiatives that they feel they can focus on. Ms. Tiezzi stated that after reviewing the Charge, if this Commission is inclined to do so, the Charge could be amended. Mr. Kretz stated that it would be good to come out of their August meeting with long and short term goals. This will also give staff more guidance as to where they need to go. He volunteered to assemble everyone's thoughts in a list of goals in an email and distribute it to the Commission. The Commission can then draft proposed action steps and get a marketing plan in place, which can all be discussed at the next Commission meeting.

Ms. Tiezzi stated that she will talk to the Town Manager to see if he can reach out to the Superintendent of Schools. She may decide to come to an upcoming meeting of the ACEC or may want to send someone in her place. Mr. Shea stated that either way, the Board of Education's Facility Manager should come as well.

Mr. Craig stated that one charge of this Commission is education, which is one topic that this Commission has done the least with. He stated that he was unsure what the avenue for this would be, whether it would be through the schools or through something town-wide.

Mr. Zahren stated that there is a forum at Trinity College on July 12th to discuss climate change and what the State can do about it. He urged the Commission members to come out for this forum if possible since this Commission's responsibility is not only the Town of Avon, but to express issues to the State. If the State does not pass the legislation to fund things, this Commission will not be able to move forward the way they hope to.

Legislative Updates

Mr. Zahren stated that the Bill SB-9 passed. There was an immediate negative reaction to some of it from some people in the industry; they feel that Connecticut is not making progress as fast as other states. He stated that this is why the Commission needs to do more advocacies with the Legislature as well as

others. He also feels there is a need to define this Commission's view of climate change from the perspective of what Avon should be looking at. Mr. Shea stated that he feels this would be a good topic for the multi-town initiative.

V. NEW BUSINESS – None.

VI. DO ANY BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THIS MEETING – None.

VII. ADJOURN

Ms. Winter made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m. Mr. Kretz seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted:
Chairman Bernard Zahren

Attest: Alison Sturgeon, Clerk