

AVON CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
September 21, 2022

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:16 p.m. by Chairperson Firestone in the Avon Room at the Avon Town Hall. Members present: Carrie Firestone, Christine Winter, Kim Stevenson and Michael Dawson. Members absent: Daniel Carvalho, Michael Guerrera and Bernie Zahren. Staff member present: Grace Tiezzi, Assistant Town Manager.

II. APPROVAL OF THE PRECEDING MINUTES – August 17, 2022

Mr. Dawson made a motion to approve the August 17, 2022 minutes with one edit. Ms. Stevenson seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

III. COMMUNICATION FROM AUDIENCE - None

IV. COMMUNICATION FROM COMMISSION

Ms. Firestone stated that new graphics will be sent out regarding “100 Homes”. Also, over the next few weeks, it would be helpful for Commission members to personally ask and send emails to friends and neighbors about some of the things they have been working on and talking about as a Commission during the past several meetings. She stated that Ms. Stevenson and Ms. Tiezzi have worked on the RFP for the more comprehensive Town assessment. They will be sending it to Mark and Bernie from PACE for their review as well.

Ms. Firestone stated that pumpkins generate millions and millions of pounds of food waste, which is a huge issue in this country. At the end of October, Sub-Edge Farm will be collecting and composting pumpkins to use for growing their crops. She encouraged the Commission members to get involved. This will be a small community event for composting pumpkins. Ms. Tiezzi suggested combining a collection for the food bank at this event as well. Ms. Winter suggested handing out a coloring page with information about the pumpkin collection for the kids to take home from school; this would reach a lot of households.

V. OLD BUSINESS - Ongoing Project Updates:

Connecticut Green Bank Solar Marketplace Assistance Program

Discussion of this agenda item was tabled until the next meeting.

EV Charging Stations

Discussion of this agenda item was tabled until the next meeting.

Green Up! Avon

Discussion of this agenda item was tabled until the next meeting.

Enford Street Grounds Pollinator Garden

Discussion of this agenda item was tabled until the next meeting.

Energy Plan

Discussion of this agenda item was tabled until the next meeting.

ACEC Newsletter

Discussion of this agenda item was tabled until the next meeting.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Presentation from Craig Peters Of Capitol Clean Cities

Ms. Firestone thanked Mr. Craig Peters of Capitol Clean Cities for coming and presenting at their meeting. She stated that transportation is a big piece of clean energy in Avon and they need to learn how to reduce Avon's footprint.

Ms. Tiezzi introduced Alex Trujillo of Public Works. He is the fleet manager and is in charge of all of the Town-owned vehicles.

Mr. Peters stated that Clean Cities / Building Partnerships is to advance affordable domestic transportations, fuels, and technologies. They cover all alternative fuels as well. There are almost 100 coalitions around the country; there are three coalitions in Connecticut. He stated that the coalitions work together as a collaborative. Recent projects they have worked on as a collaborative include electric school buses as well as municipal fleets.

Ms. Firestone questioned where Avon was in terms of EV charging station regulations. Ms. Tiezzi stated that Avon does not prohibit charging stations, although they do not have regulations that would require them for a new project or a renovation project. She stated that the Whole Foods Market has 6 charging stations; these were put in by request from the Town. She stated that even with Eversource incentives, they are still costly to purchase and install; there has to be willingness on the part of the developer.

Mr. Peters stated that the Clean Cities programs are sponsored by the United States Department of Energy; the program will be celebrating 30 years in 2023. It is the longest running government program.

Mr. Peters stated Clean Cities supports all alternative fuels. The issue with fossil fuels is the amount of greenhouse gases. The solution is, there is a renewable natural gas and renewable propane, which can give a negative zero emissions.

Regarding additional goals and objectives, Mr. Peters stated that they also promote informed consumer choice on fuel economy; they encourage use of idle reduction technologies for heavy duty truck and other vehicles; and they facilitate public and private projects.

Mr. Peters stated that they have been working with the DOT to get signs placed in alternative fuel corridors. The State of CT was approved to spend this money, in the first round, on infrastructure on the highway just for the electrification. The goal is to have a DC fast charging station every 50 miles and not more than one mile off of an exit. This will be happening across

the country; although it may take several years to complete. The RFP should be going out in October or November of this year.

Mr. Peters stated that Clean Cities has technical and problem-solving assistance and helps to connect to funding opportunities. He stated that if there is an issue with a big project, they can help by sending out their Tiger Team, which is a second level resource. They also do a lot of training webinars and education.

Ms. Stevenson questioned who is using hydrogen. Mr. Peters stated that Class 8 trucks, including tractor trailers, would be vehicles that are using hydrogen fuel cells. He stated that www.fueleconomy.gov is a great website regarding all fuel types and vehicle types.

Mr. Peters stated that over the program's 30 years, coalition projects have resulted in a cumulative impact in energy use equal to nearly 10 billion gasoline gallon equivalents resulting from reduced fuel use and increased fuel diversity. That is enough to drive the distance to the sun and back 1,175 times and enough fuel to fill nearly 1.2 million tanker trucks.

Regarding funding, Mr. Peters stated there is funding of up to \$4 million available in Round One for EVSE. Of which, \$1.2 million is for EVSE deployment at state government sites; \$1.8 million for municipal government sites; and \$1 million for non-government (open to the public) ESVE.

Ms. Tiezzi stated that Avon is applying for a charging station at the library. They would also like to put stations at trailheads in Town at some point in the future. She questioned if this funding could be layered with the Eversource incentives. Mr. Peters stated that the Town can receive both incentives, although the state could, if they see the Town is getting Eversource incentives, lower the amount they give Avon, but not necessarily. Mr. Peters stated that the proposal deadline is September 30, 2022. Once the funding has been received, the Town would have a year and a half to use that money. The Town could be pushed toward the "top of the pile" if they use a local contractor. Also, any money received cannot be for a project that has already been started.

Regarding PURA's EV charging program, Mr. Peters stated EVSE deployment targets are for single family residents; multi-unit dwellings; DC fast chargers; destination and workplace. He discussed the EV charging program, EVSE and make-ready incentives. Mr. Dawson questioned if the DC fast chargers can degrade the health of the battery. Mr. Peters stated that most of the car manufacturers will not let you go more than 85% so the batteries will not degrade. Mr. Peters stated that there are also rebates for people who want to install chargers in their homes; there are incentives that will help with the installation costs as well. Ms. Firestone stated that this is something that the Commission should let residents know about.

Regarding the CHEAPR program, Mr. Peters stated that if someone purchases an electric vehicle from a dealership, they can get \$2,250 up front at the time of purchase. The dealership will handle all of the paperwork. Currently the price of the vehicle needs to be \$50,000 or less to qualify. Private businesses, municipalities and nonprofits are also eligible for funding for up to 10 electric vehicles; this is happening in steps and should begin by the first quarter of 2023. Regarding E-bikes, people can get up to \$500 as well, again, by the first quarter of 2023. He stated that more money will be put into the budget for more outreach and marketing so the public will be aware of these incentives.

Mr. Peters went over the current and prospective timelines through the second quarter of 2023. He encouraged everyone to visit www.ct-ccc.org for more information as well.

Ms. Firestone questioned how to apply everything talked about tonight to the Town of Avon regarding how far they still need to go; and where Avon ranks compared to other communities in terms of clean vehicles. Mr. Trujillo stated that Avon has the big Class A trucks in the Public Works Department; electric trucks would not have the range or the power that their current trucks have. During snow plowing, they would not be able to take a truck off of the road to sit idle while it charged. On the Police Department side of the Town, he stated that he has looked to see what could be done within that department. They recently bought two Ford Explorer hybrids. They only received one because the second had too many issues. The one they did receive also had a few issues, all of which have been resolved. Hybrid cars do take a bit of getting used to; there is a learning curve. Mr. Trujillo stated that he does not think electric vehicles work in municipalities within all applications; bigger cities are more flexible and can operate electric vehicles more efficiently.

Ms. Firestone questioned if Mr. Peters could help the Town of Avon figure out how to meet their needs and to be more cost effective; how to put all of their puzzle pieces together. Mr. Peters stated if the Town Manager is not on board, most likely, nothing will happen. It has to come from the top. If the interest by the management of the Town exists, he would need to see how many and the types of vehicles Avon has; how often the Town replaces their vehicles; the size of the Town; and what resources they have as well as the funding. To get any type of funding, Mr. Peters stated that they can get incentives from a plug-in or all battery electric; the infrastructure would come next, which would need to be applied for.

There was a short discussion regarding school buses and the pros and cons of electric school buses. Mr. Peters stated that low income cities are getting priorities on these incentives and funding. He stated that a lot of Towns have not applied, so other Towns may want to try. He stated that the funding is awarded to the Town, not the bus company. The bus company and the Town would need to work together.

There was a short discussion regarding the idling of school buses and cars. Although there is an anti-idling law, it is not enforced. Ms. Firestone stated that this Commission did an anti-idling campaign a few years ago. Unfortunately, they were not able to get their campaign into the school system, but were successful within the community itself. She stated that this Commission should continue to share information regarding rebates and idling and at the same time be mindful about replacing vehicles and to find the best fit.

Ms. Firestone stated that the Town is going in a good direction. They need to continue to work together.

VII. ADJOURN

Ms. Stevenson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:17 p.m. Ms. Firestone seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted:
Chairperson Carrie Firestone

Attest: Alison Sturgeon, Clerk