

**DRAFT**  
**AVON CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION**  
**AVON ROOM – BUILDING #1**  
**FEBRUARY 15, 2017 @ 7:00 P.M.**  
**MINUTES**

**I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairman Zahren in the Avon Room, Building 1 Town Hall. Members present: Chairman Bernard Zahren, Marty Kaplan, Joseph Gentile, Jeffrey Macel, Don Phelan, William Shea, and Dick Kretz. Advisory Member present: Jonathan Craig. Staff present: Town Manager Brandon Robertson, Assistant to the Town Manager Grace Tiezzi and Board of Education Operations Director Myles Altimus. Others present: Alison Jackman, Eversource; John O'Toole, Eversource; Paul Michaud, Murtha Cullina; Walt Donzila, Celtic Energy; Chris Lotspeich, Celtic Energy.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE PRECEDING MEETING MINUTES - October 19<sup>th</sup>**

Mr. Zahren asked if there were any comments or changes regarding the October 19<sup>th</sup> minutes.

**VOTE:** Mr. Gentile motioned, Mr. Kaplan seconded and all agreed to accept the October 19, 2016 minutes as presented. None opposed.

**III. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

None.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

**a) Energy Usage Reporting**

Mr. Altimus reported that the Board of Education does not utilize a formal electronic system to track energy use at its six buildings as the Town's Department of Public Works does. He reported that his department reviews the utility bills each month to note inconsistencies. He reported that he had recently reached out to the school's facility maintenance program provider for a quote to add the utility tracker module and that the quote was for \$5,000 which is not a worthwhile investment for only six buildings.

Ms. Jackman reported that EnergySTAR Portfolio manager is a utility tracker program that is free of charge. She reported that Eversource is on the cusp of automatically transferring data from an entity's utility bills into the tracker.

Mr. Robertson said that regardless of whether or not the Board of Education uses formal utility tracking software, the Commission should know that energy usage for the Board of Education will be tracked each year, whether through formal software or by hand as was done during Titan Energy's Performance Analysis last year.

Mr. Zahren asked about the Board of Education solar panel installations and if we knew why it appeared our energy costs had gone up. Ms. Tiezzi reported that she has been in contact with SolarCity and they were in the process of running an analysis as to why that was. She expected to have a full report for the Commission at its April meeting.

**b) Avon Village Center Update**

Mr. Zahren reported that he, Mr. Kretz, and Mr. Shea attended a meeting with Town staff and representatives from Eversource on January 26<sup>th</sup> to discuss the status of the Avon Village Center project. He reported that the meeting had two purposes, the first was to discuss building materials/best practices

that can be utilized by the developer and energy incentives that may be available to the developer. The second, which will be discussed later on in the agenda, is to investigate the possibility of a microgrid.

Mr. Zahren asked Mr. Robertson about the language that was included in the Planning and Zoning Commission's conditional approval for the Avon Village Center project regarding energy saving measures. Mr. Zahren asked Mr. Robertson if the language was detailed enough. Mr. Robertson reported that the terms "energy saving lighting" and "green roofs" were broad examples of measures that the developer might include in its design. He reported that the Commission should be aware that the developer is working very closely with Town staff and Eversource to include energy efficient measures in the project design. He also reminded the Commission that the developer would eventually have to present its detailed site plans to the Planning and Zoning Commission for approval.

#### c) Micro Grid Discussion

Mr. Zahren reported that the January 26<sup>th</sup> meeting included a discussion about how the Commission and Town staff might proceed with a microgrid project. Mr. Robertson reported that he invited Mr. Michaud of the law firm Murtha Cullina and his colleagues Mr. Donzila and Mr. Lotspeich from Celtic Energy to come to the meeting this evening to give the Commission an overview of where we are in this process.

Mr. Robertson reported that at this point, the process consists of two pieces. First, Murtha Cullina will develop an RFP, on which Celtic Energy will provide technical assistance, to find an installer to conduct a feasibility study to look into the possibility of building a microgrid installation to serve the Town Hall facility, with the possibility of eventually expanding the installation to include the new Avon Village Center project. Murtha and Celtic will assist the Town in understanding the responses to the RFP and to choose an installer. Second, if the Town is presented with a feasible project and decides to move forward, we will begin design development with the intention of applying for grant funding. Mr. Robertson reported that he and Mr. Michaud have agreed that payment will be contingent upon the Town being presented with a feasible project and deciding to proceed. If the Town is presented with a feasible project but decides not to proceed, Murtha will charge \$5,000 for its efforts.

Mr. Lotspeich reported that the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has bond funding available for the construction and installation of municipal microgrids. The funding requires a full design to be submitted with the application and an application to be submitted to Eversource. Both require a lot of detail. He said that a municipal microgrid installation may be eligible for a Power Purchase Agreement or Virtual Net Metering.

Mr. Zahren asked what Phase I will be for Town Hall. Mr. Robertson reported that tonight was meant to be an introduction to the project. Next staff will need to start working with Murtha to assemble data for the RFP. The load profile will likely only be Town Hall at this point as there is no firm timeline for the Avon Village Center. He reported that he sees this project rolling out like the solar panels: starting small with the potential to expand. He reported that the Town Hall is critical infrastructure in an emergency situation and it has a small load profile so it is a good place to begin. We will be looking for a design that allows for expandability and interoperability in the future.

Mr. Phelan asked if there were any microgrid installations in Connecticut that Avon might look to as an example. Mr. Kaplan reported that Milford's Town Center has a microgrid. Mr. Michaud reported that he had recently worked on Woodbridge's microgrid which is under construction. He said that Woodbridge's installation was very small, only two town buildings, and was a bit different because it was owned by United Illuminating and included a fuel cell which allows UI to sell energy to the Town.

Mr. Robertson reported that the Town would own this system. He reported that he's already asked Eversource if they would be interested in owning it and they said they would not. He reported there are a lot of variables in this project and an RFP will help us get started.

Mr. Shea asked where the \$5,000 will come from if the Town chooses not to proceed with a feasible project. Mr. Robertson reported that it will likely come from Contingency or from the utility line item in the budget. Mr. Robertson said that the Town may be a good case for a microgrid project and that with a risk exposure capped at \$5,000 it will be worth going through the RFP process to see if a project might be feasible.

## **V. NEW BUSINESS:**

### **a) Encouraging Residential and Commercial Energy Efficiency**

Mr. Zahren welcomed Ms. Jackman from Eversource to discuss how the Town might encourage residents and business to engage in energy efficient practices in order to achieve a more sustainable community.

Ms. Jackman reported that 20% of Avon residents participate in Clean Energy programs like Home Energy Solutions and that Avon is doing very well when compared to other communities. She reported that about 16% of municipal and commercial facilities are participating as well. She reported that Avon has done very well so far but there are other things that Eversource can help the Town to do, like direct mailings to residents. The letter can be generic or it can be specific to an event or a project. Eversource works with the Town Manager's office to prepare the letter and Eversource takes care of all the mailing and printing at no cost to the community. Ms. Jackman also reported that Eversource has a PR firm that will put out press releases highlighting projects that the Town is completing, for example Avon could put out a press release regarding its use of its Bright Ideas Grant. The press releases can be used in the local papers, the Courant, and on social media. Ms. Jackman reported that they can do similar things for local businesses but they're not as effective because usually the person sorting through the mail is not the person who makes decisions about energy efficiency. Instead, Eversource can work with local Chambers of Commerce to do programming for commercial facilities in town. She reported that all of these activities can help the Town to earn more points towards its next Bright Ideas Grant. Right now Avon has 229 points and the Town will earn another grant once it reaches 300.

Mr. Robertson said that the Town Manager's Office would be happy to work with Eversource to put out a direct mailing to residents. He suggested that Eversource could come to do a program at the Senior Center. Ms. Jackman said that many seniors qualify for Eversource's income eligible Home Energy Solutions program which is free. For the general public the program costs \$124. She also reported that Eversource can program for all ages. They have children's activities and the eeSmarts student curriculum for use in schools.

Mr. O'Toole suggested that the Town could ask an elected official in town to complete a home energy audit and invite the press. Ms. Tiezzi suggested that the Commission may also want to consider programming at the Library as a way to capture all age groups. Mr. Shea agreed that programming through the Library was a good idea.

b) Energy Grant Update

The Commission reviewed the status of the Town's ongoing Bright Ideas Grant Project (the upgrade of parking lot lighting at the Avon High School to LED) and the Town's ongoing CT Green Bank Grant Project (the upgrade of lighting in Town Hall Buildings 5, 6, 7, and 8 to LED).

**VI. ADJOURN**

**VOTE:** Mr. Phelan motioned, Mr. Kretz seconded, and all agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. None opposed.

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
Chairman Bernard Zahren

*Attest:* Grace Tiezzi, Acting Clerk