

**AVON CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION
AVON ROOM BLDG. #1 TOWN HALL
MINUTES
FEBRUARY 17, 2016**

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Bernard Zahren in the Avon Room, Building 1 Town Hall. Members present: Chairman Bernard Zahren, Marty Kaplan, Richard Kretz and Mitch Kennedy. Members absent: Jeffrey Macel and Joseph Gentile. Advisory member present: Jonathan Craig. Staff member Town Clerk Ann Dearstyne was also in attendance. Mr. Zahren noted that Mr. Glen resigned the Commission. Ms. Dearstyne swore in the members present to another term.

II. APPROVAL OF THE PRECEDING MEETING MINUTES –Dec. 16th

Dr. Kennedy requested a change be made from “had” to “should have” under section V, page 2.

VOTE: Dr. Kennedy motioned, Mr. Kaplan seconded and all agreed to accept the December 16th minutes with the change. None opposed.

III. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE

None.

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

None.

V. NEW BUSINESS: a. Update on results 2015 – Based on goals of the Energy Plan, b. Avon Town Center, c. Clean Communities and new incentives from the State.

Mr. Zahren relayed that Mr. Robertson had wanted to attend the meeting but was unable to at the last minute. Mr. Zahren continued that there was genuine excitement all around about the new town center plan. He noted that this would put Avon on the map and this would be our time to make a statement. Mr. Zahren continued that it would make an impact on the communities all around here and spoke of Mr. Peck’s enthusiasm to make it what we can. He said the Town Council didn’t see the need to redefine the charge of the Commission and that we were redefining it ourselves by having a real impact on the new development. Mr. Zahren continued that we’d done what we could with the solarize programs and grants and energy plan and added that the 20% by 2020 was following a path that was doing okay. He noted also that Mr. Robertson should have the data available in the next few weeks supporting the 15% reduction in energy use by 2015 initiative of the energy plan. He added that Mr. Robertson could not speak for the Board of Education. Mr. Zahren continued that Mr. Robertson has hired another consultant who is going to look at the old plan and then re-benchmark everything going forward. Dr. Kennedy identified the consultant as Titan Energy.

Mr. Kaplan remarked that he didn’t see that anything in the energy plan was done to the municipal buildings other than to the schools. He questioned that if the shift in focus was being

made to the new town center then who would concentrate on the energy plan. Mr. Zahren noted that the plan was followed when they did the renovation to the first floor of Building I with efficient air conditioning and lighting. He continued that the capital budget did not allow for necessarily changing all the switches, and that it is a matter of if funding is made available for updates. Mr. Zahren said the goal was to reach the reduction in use and was pretty sure that we did. He added that both the Town and BOE had used the plan. Dr. Kennedy spoke of plans to vet firms to come in to do renovations and upgrades to the infrastructure with contracts similar to performance based agreements that would have no money coming out of the town's budget. He added that it was the only method for fast tracking wide scale efficiency changes at the municipal level other than through a bond issue. Mr. Zahren concurred that it is a matter of where the money comes from. Dr. Kennedy said that he'd like to have at least two firms to choose from and wasn't sure if we needed three to satisfy the town's requirement for an RFP. Mr. Craig suggested the town had savings from the non-removal of snow this year. Mr. Zahren agreed that Mr. Kaplan had a good point with regards to continue to follow the plan but didn't feel there was an issue of reluctance on the part of the town or Town Council. He continued that hiring a consultant to upgrade it was a sign of their continued support.

Mr. Zahren noted an upcoming February 27th meeting in North Haven with the task forces from other towns and will try to attend and asked others to as well. The meeting is on Universal Drive at the Energize CT Center, 10:00AM – 2:30PM, with a \$20 donation. He noted the new Council on Climate Change from the governor as getting more aggressive on setting more ambitious goals for 2030 instead of 2020, and certainly worth following. Given the State's state he didn't expect too much coming in the way of grants or programs from them. Mr. Zahren noted that Mr. Robertson is watching for new grants as well. Mr. Kaplan reminded of the energy audits available to the residents. Ms. Dearstyne noted how difficult it was to get the residents interested. Mr. Zahren concurred that it would take a huge effort and commitment and the Commission wasn't able to do it, coupled with the town's lack of paid staff to do it either. Mr. Zahren concluded that the additional 1,000,000 s.f. of new building would be the place where the Commission could have the greatest impact. Mr. Zahren referred to the micro grid as serving a dual purpose of providing local energy to the new buildings and back up emergency power for the existing town buildings. Mr. Zahren noted too that the funding for a micro grid was still available. He added that he'd like to form a three person committee to meet with Mr. Peck to discuss these ideas and to offer how we could help him with the project. Mr. Zahren clarified that the concept of the town center has been approved and that nothing has been issued in terms of building permits and changes were still to be made, making the timing perfect for suggestions. Mr. Kretz volunteered and Dr. Kennedy offered that he could possibly participate in the three member committee to meet with Mr. Peck.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE COMMISSION a. Solar PV/renewable energy systems, b. Financing and other ways to receive support from State/National etc., c. Carbon footprint/software tracking/Clean Communities support

Mr. Zahren noted that the solar tax credit had been extended. Dr. Kennedy added that the large ZRECs would be coming out in a few months and said now would be the time for the Town to look into it if it had another location in mind, towards the end of March or April.

Mr. Kretz discussed the town fleet and the impact on the carbon footprint. He questioned if this was the time to revisit a hybrid or natural gas run vehicle given the drop in the price of gasoline and drop in snow plowing this year. Ms. Dearstyne reminded that vehicle purchase would have to be part of a budget and this coming year's capital budget had already been presented. Mr. Zahren noted that the idea of incorporating natural gas fueling or electric charging stations into the new town center would incentivize the town to purchase these types of vehicles when the time came for replacement. Mr. Kaplan commended Alex Trujillo for his excellent work in benchmarking for the town's fleet.

Members discussed the different things they'd like to see in the new town center. Mr. Zahren would like to see a micro grid. Mr. Kretz questioned who would own the street lighting because it would dictate what type of lighting would be put in. Mr. Craig said it would lead to mitigating the amount atmospheric lighting (light pollution) with ground lighting and how much solar was being used with LED. Dr. Kennedy would like to see copious amounts of shading on south faces to reduce heat load in buildings. Mr. Craig offered this could be done with roof overhangs. Dr. Kennedy continued that there were designs that could reduce heat load through windows. He noted that many commercial leases are done to fit the tenant's requirements and you'd be able to convince the tenant to rent here because the net cost of operation would be lower due to these energy efficiencies. He continued that we should look at landscape irrigation for water mitigation and also hoped that no invasive species be planted. Mr. Zahren questioned plantings in the open space and fertilizers, watering and insecticides and what would be the most sustainable grass cover. Dr. Kennedy offered organic lawns as being feasible now. Mr. Kaplan suggested variable speed drives for water pumps. Dr. Kennedy offered that the owners would be open to using stretch building codes. Mr. Kaplan questioned if there would be more flat roofs. Mr. Zahren guessed there'd be some but the designs had not yet been set. Dr. Kennedy discussed grass roof systems and cautioned potential problems with storm water run-off. Mr. Kretz would like to see a route 10 bridge or tunnel as part of the proposed bike path. Mr. Zahren offered to start a list.

Ms. Dearstyne reminded the members to email their disclosure forms to her.

VII. DO ANY BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THIS MEETING

VIII. ADJOURN

VOTE: Mr. Kretz motioned, Mr. Kaplan seconded and all agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:05PM. None opposed.

Respectfully submitted:
Chairman Bernard Zahren

Attest: Susan Gatcomb, Clerk