

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH NH

Portsmouth Energy Advisory Committee

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

NOTES

Attending: Councilor John Tabor, Tom Rooney, Ben D’Antonio, Kevin Charette, Peter Somssich. Prospective members Tracey Cameron, Betsy Blaisdell. Staff: Peter Britz, Stephanie Seacord (recording secretary).
Excused: Councilor Kate Cook, Herb Lloyd,

Video recording: <https://youtu.be/ORV0-LySdCI>

- 1. Councilor Tabor called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm** – Congratulated Committee members on their reappointment and called for nominations to elect a chair for the 2024-2025 term. Councilor Tabor was re-elected on a nomination from Kevin Charette seconded by Ben D’Antonio. Councilor Tabor abstained from the otherwise unanimous vote.
- 2. Roll call.**
- 3. Minutes for December 20, 2023 meeting** – Approved on a motion from Peter Somssich, seconded by Tom. Kevin abstaining as he did not attend that meeting.
- 4. Mission and Goals** – Chair recapped the mission/goals discussion from the December meeting as reported in the minutes. Committee discussed details before voting on their priorities.
- 5. PEAC Priorities for 2024-2025:**

PEAC Group Exercise ranking action areas

3 Oversight of Portsmouth Community Power	
2 Maximize Opt Ups to Clean 50, Clean 100	
5 Community-scale solar projects (ideally that benefit residents directly)	
2 Community solar projects that benefit renters through RSA 363 A-9 and Inflation Reduction Act	
3 Lower municipal carbon footprint (behind the meter solar, EVs, resiliency through battery storage)	
1 Advocate with CPCNH for renewable energy projects in state/region	
2 Involve high school students	
1 Amend zoning to remove barriers to solar	
2 Incentives for multi-family and commercial buildings that are efficient and fossil-fuel free	
2 Energy performance standards for buildings	
1 Advocate in Concord for energy legislation	
4 Collaborate with neighboring towns and cities on priorities and accomplishments, best practices	
2 Micro grids	

Rank-ordered

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Discussion of priorities for each member of PEAC:

Peter:

Net metering: Any update on CPCNH's efforts to address net metering. Kevin reported that CPCNH is still working on it. A link to their new FAQs document on the topic is posted to the Portsmouth Community Power webpage: [Net Metering + Community Power FAQ 6Feb2024.pdf \(cityofportsmouth.com\)](#) The only option now is for net metering customers could switch to Portsmouth Community Power to take advantage of Clean 100 – but lose their credits -- and then switch back to net metering. CPCNH CEO Brian Callnan recently did a brown bag session on the issue and will supply a recording of that soon (will also be posted on the webpage).

1. CPCNH is also pursuing three dockets with PUC and the NH Legislature:
 - Electrical business transactions overhaul
 - Load measurement
 - Net metering
2. Would like to see PEAC remain as a separate committee, not part of the Sustainability Committee. One key role is to correct errors in definitions/clarify Climate Action Plan, Bike Ped Plan, etc. Kevin noted that in the next phase PEAC can enable CPCNH at the local level.

Kevin:

1. PEAC should support the Coalition voice in Concord on related bills now that CPCNH has an active Legislative issues director and regular committee. There are 18 bills under review (see CEO report in PEAC packet). As PEAC remains the energy project and policy advocate, providing insight and education on those topics for the City, it can advise the City's Legislative Subcommittee on bills.
2. Rather than chasing the outline goals ourselves, we should leverage the guidance of CPCNH in direct consultation with the Projects Director.
3. With 16 live member communities and another 12-13 coming on board in March PEAC should collaborate with like-minded neighboring members, eg Dover (Jackson Caspari)
4. Pursue Dept of Energy grant. Ben is already working on GRIP (IRA Federal funds dispersed to the states, especially to Justice 40 historically disadvantaged communities – Portsmouth?). He volunteered to be point person. Tracy also mentioned CPRT grants with March deadline for implementation in April. He and Kevin will be meeting with Clifton Below via Zoom. He commented "It will be helpful to start thinking about some specific initiatives that the PEAC (or the City, generally) would be likely to pursue, if we had better access to customer energy usage information. If we have an initiative that PEAC seems interested in committing to, that is the kind of detail that would be nice to include in the application, due mid-May."
5. Suggest series of meetings with key CPCNH directors as guests.
6. Advocate to get more commercial customers into the program by determining rate options for large commercial and industrial customers including the City. The Municipal contract was 8 cents/kwh when PCP went live – now a more attractive option, depending on the duration of the contract.

Tom:

All of CPCNH initiatives in terms of projects are 3-4 years out, Portsmouth may want to do something sooner (e.g. community solar) while getting guidance and broader horsepower from CPCNH staff and lead-adopted communities. Chair Tabor noted we need the coalition to do things we can't do alone and can gain insight from other members, eg Hanover commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030. By deciding the goals and governance for PEAC efforts become more clear and better able to synch with CPCPNH as a powerful ally.

Ben:

1. What does ‘collaborate’ mean? Talking to other towns about common areas of focus to generate best practice guidance. Looking at regional projects. Also letting smaller progressive towns around us “pick Portsmouth’s brain.”
2. Support for local clean energy projects. Discussion of greenhouse gas impacts of local clean energy projects relative to bundled supply and RECs. Encourage exploration of local clean energy projects.
Peter Britz:

PEAC still needs to provide more education to the community about Portsmouth Community Power and opting-up.

Betsy:

Many energy-related items that seem ‘low-hanging fruit’ for PEAC, such as zoning to allow EV charging stations anywhere gas stations are allowed (limit is that PUC prohibits the owners from charging for their use)

6. Future Meetings:

- a. Invite other adjacent CPCNH member towns for collaborative discussion
- b. Discuss solar power projects to prioritize questions before inviting additional vendors (ReVision presented at September 27, 2023 meeting)

7. Other Business

- a. Ben asked if staff would please report on:
 - the terms of the current Municipal power contract,
 - Eversource statistics on loads (Aggregation Plan detail)
 - What the process is for PEAC to make recommendations. Chair Tabor noted the protocol is for PEAC to make recommendations to the City Council via him (as Council PEAC representative) to decide on policy.
 - Also asked to clarify whether the CAP item on “Building performance standards” refers to Municipal or community.

8. **Adjournment** at 7 pm on a motion from Peter seconded by Ben.