



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH NH
Portsmouth Energy Advisory Committee
Wednesday, July 24, 2024 at 6:30 pm

Meeting recording: <https://youtu.be/vzoqiY8wxo4>

Attending: Councilor John Tabor, Kevin Charette, Peter Somssich, Herb Lloyd, Councilor Cook, Ben D'Antonio. Staff: Peter Britz, Stephanie Seacord (recording secretary) Not attending: Tom Rooney, Betsy Blaisdell, Tracey Cameron

1. Roll call – Chair Tabor called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.
2. **Approval of Minutes** – on a motion by Kevin Charette seconded by Herb Lloyd.
3. **Chairman's remarks**
 - i. After discussion with DPW Director Peter Rice, agreed to postpone the discussion of managing energy efficiency in city buildings to the September 4 meeting to give the City's energy consultants time to prepare a report.
 - ii. Thought it would be useful to touch base, without out decision making votes needed, on what PEAC has underway.
4. **CPCNH rates for Aug 1 announced with press release.** Kevin noted that the NH Energy Coop is now part of the mix and that CPCNH has always wanted to offer residents the lowest electricity rate. So although the utilities have requests 10 cent rates, the Coop came in a 8.64 so CPCNH set their rate at 8.6 cents. The Coop has a similar procurement schedule as CPCNH.
 - i. CPCNH sent the City a quantity of postcards with the new rates. Distributed in public spaces at City Hall and library.
 - ii. Councilor Cook commented that Eversource is increasing its distribution rate as well as the power rate, so if PUC approves, bills may be higher and customers may need explanation.
5. **Discussion of RECs** and Councilor Tabor's response to resident Calderola's letter. Ben advised that a simple way to understand the benefit of CPCNH purchasing RECs with Granite Plus, Clean 50 and Clean 100 rate premiums is that a) in aggregate across member communities the impact is much greater than the '2 percent' Mr. Calderola is getting from his home solar array; and b) that CPCNH's purchase of large amounts of New England's available RECs has an indirect effect on the grid in terms of renewables but that investment drives the demand and encourages solar projects with a direct effect on the grid. Plus the premiums help CPCNH build the reserves that eventually will allow for investment in building renewables projects with direct effect. It is still difficult to estimate CPCNH's direct carbon reduction in tons.
 - i. PCP customers need a transparent explanation of the difference between choosing the Clean 100 rate and purchasing green energy. All customers receive the same power through the wires, which is required to be generated with a minimum of 23.4% renewables. Councilor Tabor shared the CPCNH labelling explaining the proportion of renewables in each rate.
 - ii. Peter Somssich commented that the message that energy efficiency measures are an immediate and effective way to reduce carbon.
 - iii. Kevin commented that it would be helpful for CPCNH to produce consumer-oriented white papers on issues such as RECs and net metering.
 - iv. Peter S raised the issue of advising Portsmouth solar customers that they CAN join Portsmouth Community Power easily if their solar was installed before September 2017 (NetZero 1.0). The current legal issue is that the formula for calculating credits for solar

installed after that date (NetZero 2.0) is more complicated and Eversource is resistant to making those constant adjustments. Kevin noted that this distinction was explained in the CPCNH FAQs from the start and that CPCNH made the decision to downplay the nuances to avoid confusing customers and had hoped the issue would be quickly resolved. Councilor Tabor noted a CPCNH call on net metering scheduled for July 26. Perhaps PEAC or CPCNH could notify the 140 or so Portsmouth solar customers about 1.0/2.0 and joining PCP.

- v. Peter Britz noted that the Green Challenge will be an opportunity to explain Clean 50/100 and RECs. PEAC agreed to amend the draft Green Challenge press release with this explanation: Customers can pay a bit more to choose Granite Plus (33% renewables), Clean 50 (50% renewables) or Clean 100 (100% renewables). CPCNH uses the rate premiums to buy Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) creating more demand for RECs on the energy market that in turn encourages more investments in renewable energy production projects.
6. **Green Challenge** – Participating: Dover, Portsmouth, Newmarket, Durham and Exeter. Duration: Aug 1, 2024 through Jan 31, 2025. The town that increases the percentage of customers choosing to opt-up in that timeframe wins. City communications team will be producing and sharing promotional materials for the Challenge. Note to check with Lisa Sweet, commenting as CPCNH board member not Rye energy committee.
7. **“Solar for All” program** – Councilor Cook commented that Betsy did a fantastic job and that the mix of participants able to comment on their different experiences with solar was very informative. Recommended that future programs and other presentations be recorded for later viewing. 20 attendees – who saved the sign-in sheet?
8. **NREL first meeting with advisors**, PEAC members and DPW went very well. Herb provided an outline of objectives and scope in advance. Herb getting feedback from DPW so NREL can respond with more detail on providing technical assistance for a specific project involving the wastewater treatment facility at Peirce Island or Pease (solar in expansion of Pease WWTF, reducing the energy consumption on sludge processing or assessment of distributed wind as a resiliency initiative at Peirce Island) . Ben asked how any project would be funded. NREL will advise on Federal and State grant money that is available. Councilor Cook and Tabor will be looking at how to include energy reduction capital projects in the CIP that don’t impact one department budget vs. another (e.g. school budget to include solar arrays in the reconstruction of the PHS parking lot) and mocking up CIP elements as placeholders.
9. **Old business: assessing Jones Avenue landfill as a solar array site**
 - i. Peter Britz recommended reviewing the NHDES report from 5-6 years ago on what’s possible at the site.
 - ii. Herb to engage with Katrin at CleanEnergyNH
 - iii. Subcommittee of Herb, Kevin, Peter Somssich to report back at September meeting.
10. Adjourned at 8 pm on a motion by Ben seconded by Councilor Cook.

Next PEAC meeting: Wednesday, September 4 at 6:30 pm