



**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH NH**  
**Portsmouth Energy Advisory Committee**  
**Wednesday, June 5, 2024 at 6:30 pm**

**Meeting recording:**

[6.5.2024 Portsmouth Energy Advisory Committee \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6.5.2024-Portsmouth-Energy-Advisory-Committee)

Attending: Councilor John Tabor, Tom Rooney, Kevin Charette, Betsy Blaisdell, Tracey Cameron, Peter Somssich. Via Zoom: Herb Lloyd. Excused: Councilor Cook, Ben D'Antonio. Staff: Jillian Harris, Stephanie Seacord (recording secretary)

1. Roll call – Chair Tabor called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.
2. Approval of Minutes – on a motion by Betsy Blaisdell seconded by Peter Somssich.
3. Chairman's remarks
  - i. City Council voted unanimously to engage NRLB on a renewables feasibility study for the Peirce Island Wastewater Treatment facility. Requested the PEAC think about its work for the balance of the year during this discussion, to determine where the most impact can be made.
4. Solar working group update – Betsy reported meeting with the Sustainability Committee and their plan to partner on a Community Conversation, July 11 at 6:30 pm in the Levenson Room of the Portsmouth Public Library. She supplied this outline and notes for the event:

**PEAC Community Conversation - Renewables**  
**Levenson Room on Wednesday July 11th from 6:30-8**

- I. Context Setting (2 min)
  - a. Current US personal carbon budget
  - b. What we need to achieve
- II. City's Climate Action Plan Overview (2 min)
  1. Building Energy Conservation and Efficiency
  2. Clean Buildings and Transportation
  3. Renewable Energy Production and Procurement
  4. Sustainable Waste Management
  5. Climate-Smart Land Use
- III. What the City is Doing- quick slide with highlights (2 min)
- IV. The Importance of Efficiency (5 min)
  - a. Fastest to slowest payback chart
  - b. Rebates and resources
- V. The focus of tonight's presentation: Accessing renewables (20 min)
  - a. Community Power Opt-in
  - b. On-site solar
    - i. What you need
      1. Sunlight
      2. Real estate
      3. Permission (condo assoc. or landlord, city, grid interconnection)
    - ii. Financing options
      1. Lease
      2. Loan

3. Cash
- iii. Getting quotes
  1. Solar developers – who are they/what do they offer
  2. What you need to know
- iv. Financing pros and cons
- VI. Introduction to Portsmouth experts (1 min)
- VII. Breakout groups (condo/rental; homeowners) with leading questions (30 min)
  - a. What are the benefits?
  - b. What barriers do you have to overcome?
  - c. For experts: what lessons did you learn; what would you do differently?

Feedback from the 6/6/2024 PEAC meeting:

John to send me some contacts (Byron Matto – on the school board)

Peter to send a neighbor who did SunRun leasing

Ask a realtor about resale values for solar homes

Stephanie/Monte to promote thru City channels: newsletter, social media, website, Library

Determine CPCNH marketing support and invite

Tracey/Tom to send NH Saves contact

5. Seacoast Green Energy Challenge – Chair Tabor and the City Manager held a Zoom call with Dover, Durham, Newmarket and Rye and set the challenge parameters:
  - i. Trophy to the town that increases opt-up enrollments by the greatest percentage.
  - ii. Trophy to the town who improves its renewables by the largest percent
  - iii. Provide “I’ve opted up! Portsmouth Community Power” lawn signs to raise awareness and recognize participation.
  - iv. The towns will meet again on June 28 to refine the challenge. Goal is to conduct a promotional blitz in conjunction with the July announcement of the new rates effective August 1, 2024.
6. CPCNH –
  - i. The Committee discussed the new CPCNH possible 5<sup>th</sup> option on rates: an “adder rate” that allows a member (PCP) to add a few pennies to build a savings reserve intended for a specific project. This is separate from the CPCNH reserves currently being built and which will ultimately provide funds for a PCP project. PEAC agreed that it makes sense to see what the member communities of Peterborough and Enfield do with their pilot adder rates. Kevin noted that since it would be an optional rate rather than being applied across all customers, the funds collected through an adder rate would be small.
  - ii. There is no update on the net metering legal challenge CPCNH is pursuing but unlike MA and CT there is no defined decision schedule in the NH PUC docket. Betsy reported an offhand discussion with a Lowe’s employee who sells solar panels. When asked what Portsmouth customers see as the biggest obstacle to going solar he said, “Not being able to participate in Portsmouth Community Power.”
7. Municipal energy conservation work – Herb’s discussion with DPW Director Peter Rice about the NLRB study led to additional discussion about the city’s existing conservation initiatives and energy management program contract, renewables and energy efficiency projects such as anaerobic digesters at Peirce Island WWTF and municipal energy contracts. Peter and Brian Goetz also agree with Herb that we have a long runway for implementing the recommendations that come from the NLRB report.
8. Future item – Among the discussion items with Peter Rice was the idea of the Jones Avenue capped landfill as a potential solar array site (along the lines of the Exeter solar array description and cash flow in the packet). There are many questions to answer: weight and ground penetration affecting the cap, own or lease? Where would the power go (interconnect infrastructure)? Kevin observed that this type of project is on the CPCNH Project Director’s radar, especially while Federal funds are available for 30 percent of the upfront investment. At the same time, it would build goodwill with citizens to see Portsmouth taking action.
9. Tracey suggested PEAC might define some energy efficiency/savings benchmarks:

- i. Portsmouth Public Library LEED benefits
- ii. DPW energy and facilities management results – Lebanon has documented millions of dollars saved through the city's programs.

**Next meeting: Wednesday, July 10, 2024 at 6:30 pm**

Meeting adjourned on a motion by Tracey, seconded by Peter at 8 pm.