

ORLEANS TOWN CLERK  
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Approved by the ECAC on March 9  
Energy and Climate Action Committee  
Minutes February 9, 2023

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON March 9, 2023, AT 4:15 PM

Present: Susan Chandler, Kevin Clements, Martin Culik, David Jacobson, Hakim Janah, John Londa, Roger McDaniel

Select Board Representative: Michael Herman (Virtual)

Guests: Carol Ridley, and

Virtual Guests: Fran McClennen , (Pleasant Bay Alliance), Walter Gray (Power Options), Allen Giles (Solect Energy).

The meeting was called to order at 4:17 pm.

Announcements: There will be an EV panel of car owners to discuss EV ownership on Feb 18 at 10 am in the Truro Library.

Pleasant Bay Alliance: Carol Ridley, and Fran McClennen gave a brief history of the Alliance which is a nonprofit organization whose member towns are Orleans, Chatham, Harwich and Brewster. This organization has been in existence for more than 2 decades. Much of its work focuses on nitrogen remediation as well as preservation of the bay's shoreline. The committee has undertaken a series of studies on the effects of sea level rise resulting from climate change. Last year, the committee applied to the state Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program for a grant. They received \$292,700 in funding. It is a 2-year grant and the committee is using these funds to develop a climate adaptation plan for the Pleasant Bay area. They are assessing potential sea level rise and the health of the Nauset beach spit which provides protection for Nauset beach. They have engaged the Wright-Pierce engineering firm which has been working with the town of Orleans on a range of issues. Wright-Pierce is helping the Alliance assess low-lying public access points and the protection of water supply and sewer infrastructure. The Alliance is also partnering with the National Seashore to assess the threat of sea level rise to field grass and salt marsh areas. In this first year, they are gathering information. They plan develop summaries of their studies to bring to the public in order to develop priorities and the actions that might be taken. They plan to get back to our committee and others in the future. Of interest, is their approach to find how the natural environment is able to respond to climate change and protect itself.

Hakeem Janah had some funding questions and David Jacobson had some questions about the final product produced by this study. Carol Ridley replied that there is additional support coming from the National Seashore and that the products produced by this effort will be conceptual plans, not detailed plans.

Old business: John Londa reported on progress on the renewable energy strategy including the 2 solar projects discussed in previous meetings. This is documented in the report he prepared. John recommends that this report be sent to the DPW, the town manager, and the select board.

Proposed Watershed Solar Project. Roger McDaniel reported he has not been able to do very much on this project since the bulk of his work this last month involved the stretch code. David Jacobson said we learned that any energy produced in the watershed area must be used only for water supply pumping. It cannot be used for other projects like wastewater treatment. Roger stated that we must obtain a precise statement of the limitations on any power generated from the watershed property. There should be a document with all the rules regarding this that is available to the committee.

Updated Stretch Codes. Roger McDaniel had distributed a summary of the latest stretch code update status prior to the meeting. In 2018, Orleans adopted a stretch code. Currently, 80% of the towns in MA have also done this. The current stretch code was just automatically updated. The issue is whether Orleans will adopt a more stringent "opt-in" stretch code.

Using Power Options to Provide Vendors for the Towns solar Projects. Power Options is a non-profit that helps municipal governments and non-profits with energy issues. It works in many areas including solar development. They are akin to CVEC. Power Options goes out every three years to select solar vendors for projects within their purview. Solect Energy is a solar vendor to Power Options. The committee discussed the possibility of using Power Options as an alternate to CVEC on some future projects, particularly since CVEC has been unable to find solar contractors for the two Orleans solar projects identified by the town for development. Ron Collins joined the meeting but said that a decision to use Power Options instead of CVEC on projects was not in his domain. It would have to be done at a higher level within the town administration. Walter Gray responded that the maximum cost to the town to work with Power Options on procuring bid for solar installations, prior to a final vendor selection, would be \$1000, which actually is a fee to join the association. He noted that using CVEC requires paying a fee proportional for power usage by the project. This fee can be substantial. Power Options charges a fixed fee and gets additional income through an agreement with Solect Energy.

Ron Collins stated that our committee should review typical contracts with Power Options to determine and compare costs to the town. He said that we should do due diligence on Solect Energy, including reviewing financial statements, background checks and sample contracts and provide that information to the town finance department. We can use this information to compare it with contracts the town has with CVEC. David Jacobson said that we are looking beyond CVEC because of the delays with the CVEC to produce any contracts for the current two proposed solar projects. Michael Herman stated that the procedure suggested by Ron Collins was the proper way forward. Ron Collins said that Power Options should submit their background material as well as a formal proposal to the Town Manager. Ron Collins said that info on the two proposed projects is contained in public documents that we can share with Power Options.

Green Community Project Update. Ron Collins stated that these funds could be applied to one or more on-going projects. Replacement of the town hall chiller is one such project and replacement of other existing cooling equipment with new units that use 410A refrigerant is another. We need to document these proposed projects and present them to the Green Community fund administrator in order to get

the funds. DOER will make the determination regarding the amount attributable to energy savings upgrades, and which can qualify for Green Community funding for these projects. Ron Collins is working with Cape Light Compact to determine what part of these project budgets can come from Green Community Act funds and again emphasized that we must complete these projects before we can apply for funding reimbursement.

John Londa raised the issues regarding EV chargers at Nauset Beach and possible funding sources for them. He suggested that Green Community funds could be available for the EV project. Ron Collins stated that our committee should do some research to see how much the EV operating expenses to the town would be. Hakim Janah asked about the cost of installing level 3 EV chargers. Ron Collins replied that they would be about \$50,000 per charger as compared with about \$10,000 for a level 2 charger. In addition, state funds for level 3 chargers have all been committed. David Jacobson said that, based on his research, Ron may not be aware of the current available rebates for charging stations. John Londa said that a Mass DOER grant could cover the entire purchase price for the three charging stations. There are costs to the town: a network cost of \$1,385 per unit and an assurance (maintenance) fee of \$2,620. Those costs are per unit for a 5-year period. This topic will be further discussed at next month's meeting of our committee.

Specialized Energy Codes. Roger McDaniel led the discussion. Orleans adopted the current stretch code in 2018. This code was adopted by 80% of Massachusetts towns and every town on the Cape except for the town of Barnstable. In addition to that, the DOER created an augmented stretch code which is sometimes referred to as a specialized or augmented stretch code that adds on additional requirements. Adoption of these additional requirements would require a town meeting vote.

David Jacobson stated that if the new stretch code required that new construction be wired such that future buildings be electrically ready for solar and/or heat pumps then this is not a major deal. Roger McDaniel said that he has received documents that have differing descriptions of the new stretch code.

Meeting of Town Committee Chairs. Susan, Roger and Hakim attended the select board meeting of town committee chairs. The select board encouraged the town committee chairs to communicate with each other. Susan reported to the select board that we are currently discussing the new stretch codes. She reported that Wellfleet and Truro are moving ahead on preparing enhanced stretch codes requirements to be voted on in their towns. David Jacobson said that he thought the town building inspector would be the person to present the new code at a future town meeting. Martin suggested that our committee invite Thomas Evers, the town building inspector, to a future meeting of our committee. Martin also informed us that when we applied for the Green Community funds we met with the town inspector to determine the impact of the current stretch codes at that time. Susan stated that, prior to the relevant town meeting, we needed to do some outreach to town residents. Martin noted that we should see what will happen at the Truro and Wellfleet meetings with respect to the proposed new stretch codes.

David Jacobson reported that, at the CLC meeting yesterday, he learned of a new program that aids with batteries, photovoltaics, and heat pumps to single family, deed restricted properties. The program pays close to 100% of costs for these items. Martin added that the target is to fund 100 houses over the next 2 years. Eligible buildings must currently use either electric resistance, propane, or oil for heat. Low-

income properties will be 100% paid for and moderate-income properties will be reimbursed for 80% of costs.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Kevin Clements