

Hamilton Environmental Impact Committee (HEIC)

Minutes of meeting, February 1, 2024

Location: Zoom call

Meeting called to order at 5:04 pm by Jeanne Maurand, who called the roll.

Members present: Jeanne Maurand; Emmett Holt, Don Perkins, Kimberly Strovink

Also present: Vicky Masone, Town Energy Manager; Nancy Stehfest from Hamilton Human Rights Commission

Issues discussed and votes taken:

- Minutes reviewed and approved:
 - 11/2/2023 -- Jeanne moved to approve with minor corrections, 2nd by Emmett, approved by committee.
 - 11/30/2023 – Jeanne moved to approve with adding Vicky Masone to list of attendees, 2nd by Emmett, approved by committee.
 - 12/7/2023 and 1/4/2024, Jeanne moved to approve as written, Emmett seconded, approved by committee.
- Discussion of plan for meeting with Senator Bruce Tarr on February 6 to explore whether he can help us expedite Town Hall solar plan with National Grid. Vicky has invited DPW Director Tim Olsen and Town Manager Joe Domelowicz. All HEIC can attend at that time except Emmett. Vicky briefly reviewed the case we want to make to Sen Tarr. Jeanne says Rep Kassner is also aware of the issue and suggests we send the Rep a follow-up after meeting with the Senator.
- Energy Manager update:
 - Town Hall geothermal heat pumps is looking like a go! The proposal is for two wells 1000 feet deep. Much more efficient than outside air heat pumps because heat is removed and sunk into water at a much more favorable temperature than outside air.
 - Vicky is closing out the current Green Communities grant so we'll be eligible for the next cycle in the fall. This is potentially \$500k to be used for Town Hall electrification.
 - Tim Olsen has told Vicky the DPW Ford Lightning will be arriving any day. This will be the town's first EV. Maybe we can show it off at Little League opening day in the spring, and Touch a Truck day at the HW library in the summer. HW Climate Action Team (HWCATs) may also give us an opportunity to with events at Earth Week around 4/22.

- Jeanne reported Wenham has now established a sister committee to HEIC and is recruiting members.
- Emmett reported December was the first month of the new Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) contract through which residents can buy greener energy than National Grid standard. Transition from last contract has been difficult. Many past CCA subscribers including HEIC members were bumped off but some are now back on. Emmett reports about 20 residents are now enrolled; the enrollment under the prior contract was about 50. Emmett will email the old list of enrollees to offer assistance getting re-enrolled. The current contract is for 2 years. We may encounter a similar problem in 2 years.
- Don reported no news on electric vehicles for the town beyond the anticipated Ford Lightning. He says some towns have fully electric police cruisers (Weston has a Tesla, for example). Vicky notes that the Town Manager wants a charging network in place prior to buying and administrative EV for the police department; she is working on this. Don raised the possibility of influencing replacement of landscaping equipment, which is far more polluting than autos (and especially equipment with 2-stroke engines).
- Schools: Vicky emailed HWRSD Facilities Director Tom Geary on 1/9, asking about current composting practices. She will follow up with him on this. We then discussed what we know of possible elementary school building plans. Supt Eric Tracy will be talking on this at Hamilton COA on Monday 2/5. He has said that Massachusetts requires new schools to meet LEED Silver standards; the district could pay extra for Gold or Platinum levels. Vicky notes that LEED standards are now somewhat outdated. The current proposal seems to focus on a single elementary school building at the Cutler site. There are currently 847 pre-K through elementary in the system; the new building would accommodate 750 with the remainder being the youngest children at Buker.
- Jeanne reported that Heather Ryan of HWCATs will promote Earth Day events with support from HEIC. She also noted the upcoming Town Meeting in April.
- Vicky reports our municipal electric purchase is now 100% renewable!!! Prior National Grid surpluses that were stuck in various town accounts have now been appropriately allocated, which is a huge relief. Members congratulated our Energy Manager on these accomplishments. Re HWRSD, Vicky will inquire with the district about its plans for purchasing renewable energy. The District's current electric contract expires around September 2024. The solar canopy planned for the High School / Middle School parking area is currently stuck in a National Grid study group. We are still waiting for the Commonwealth to release guidance on upcoming Green Schools grants. Vicky thinks the new Swampscott Elementary school may be a net-zero exemplar for other communities.
- Jack will attend the School Building committee meeting on 2/5.

- Jeanne reports increased concern on local Facebook site about PFAS in planned turf fields at the HS/MS.
- Next meeting of HEIC will be with Senator Tarr on 2/6, and then a regular meeting on Thursday March 7.

Jack moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Don, meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:59 pm.

Prepared by:

J. Simons, clerk

Respectfully submitted as approved at the June 6, 2024 meeting by Jack Simons, clerk