

Hamilton Environmental Impact Committee (HEIC)

Minutes of meeting, February 6, 2024

Location: Hamilton Town Hall Memorial Room

Meeting called to order at 1:41 pm by Jeanne Maurand, who called the roll.

Members present: Jeanne Maurand; Emmett Holt, Don Perkins, Kimberly Strovink (arrived 1:45 pm).

Also present: State Senator Bruce Tarr, Town Energy Manager Vicky Masone, Town Manager Joe Domelowicz, DPW Director Tim Olsen.

Issues discussed and votes taken:

- Jeanne welcomed Senator Tarr and our other guests and described the history of the HEIC and the goals of the Town to become carbon neutral.
- Joe shared the history of the Town Hall renovation project, including financing challenges that led to rejection of plans at Town Meeting, and to the current proposal which splits the project into two concurrent components. The first component is fully funded by Community Development Funds and free cash and will include preservation of the building shell as well as ADA and other code compliance upgrades; the second part will be accomplished with an Energy Services Contract and will include a solar array (on the roof of the DPW garage) to power the building, and high-efficiency geothermal heat pumps to heat and cool the building.
- Senator Tarr asked highly knowledgeable and technical questions regarding financing, weatherization, code compliance and other issues. Joe and Tim explained details about the planned sequencing and management of the project. Sen Tarr expressed strong support for the project, stating "I'm thrilled".
- Vicky explained that the solar component of the project is relatively small (around 55 kW) and that the power generated by the solar array would be further reduced by Town Hall power consumption ("behind the meter"). Therefore, the project should have little impact on the electric grid. Nonetheless, National Grid has placed our connection request into a study queue, which is usually the case for large projects that will actually affect load balancing on the grid. Our vendor has requested of National Grid that we be removed from the study queue, which threatens significant delays to the project, but has not been able to obtain an exemption. We are hoping Sen Tarr can assist in our request to National Grid to have our project exempted. Sen Tarr said he intended to get involved.
- Senator Tarr asked that Vicky send him an email with a description of the project and the number of the Study Group at National Grid. He also suggested that the

town should make a formal request to National Grid for an exemption, copying the Senator. Joe asked HEIC to send a recommendation to the Select Board , copying him, to make this request to National Grid.

- Vicky noted that the proposed High School / Middle School solar canopy, which would have larger grid impact, is already in the National Grid study group queue, and that we would not be asking for an exemption on that project.
- Sen Tarr asked whether there is a plan for methane recapture at the landfill. Vicky said there is no plan at this time.
- Vicky stated that Hamilton was just turned down for the second time for a state Disabilities Office grant (\$250k for a new elevator for the Town Hall renovation). Sen Tarr encouraged us to contact his office to explore this.

Jack moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Don, meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 2:20 pm.

Prepared by:

J. Simons, clerk

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