

**Town of Ipswich  
Climate Resiliency Committee  
Town Hall, Meeting Room C  
Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 5:30 pm**

**Meeting Minutes**

Attendees

In-person: Mike Johnson – Chair, Carolyn Britt – Vice Chair, Kerry Mackin – Select Board, Mary DeLai – Climate Resiliency Manager, Jamie Donovan, Rebecca Love, Carl Nysten  
Zoom: Pav Kneedler – SC, Dylan – ELD, Michele Hutton

1) Citizen Queries

There were no citizen queries.

2) Review and approve minutes of November meeting

Motion to approve made by Carolyn, seconded by Mike. Unanimously approved.

3) Climate Resiliency Manager Report

Ms. DeLai noted that she will report on those items not included elsewhere on the agenda.

Ms. DeLai reported that we hope to hear about our DOER META Grant application within the next week or two. She informed members that if we are not awarded grant funds, we would seek appropriation through the Town Manager from town reserve funds.

Mr. Johnson asked about the timeline for when an OPM contract would need to be executed and funded to get us through the rest of the ESCO project. Ms. DeLai responded that there were sufficient funds on an existing PO to get us through the EMS RFQ evaluation, but to continue past that stage, a new contract and funding source would need to be in place – by mid-February, ideally.

Ms. DeLai reported that she met with the Town Manager along with Jon Blair (ELD), Rick Clark (DPW) and Frank Ventimiglia (DPW) to discuss the possibility of siting a ground mounted solar array on the closed and capped Town landfill. Ms. DeLai reported that a post-closure permit application had been drafted by one of the Town's engineering consultants but that application was never submitted to DEP. There are several concerns that have been raised about the possibility of DEP requiring costly post-closure measures that exceed the regulations that were in effect at the time of the original closure. Mike

referenced a copy of a memo from Tighe and Bond from 2016 that stated that Town had met the requirements for landfill closure in existence at the time.

Ms. DeLai has volunteered to support this effort by investigating these concerns, evaluating feasibility – financial and environmental, and providing options for the community to consider. Some of the feasibility work could be done as part of the ESCO project, as could the construction of such a system should project economics favor that approach.

Ms. Mackin asked whether the town is looking at options to replace the second wind turbine. Dylan reported that the Select Board took no action on the proposal to repower the existing non-functioning wind turbine. Mr. Johnson suggested that the Town reissue a solicitation to hire a firm that would repower the wind turbine.

Ms. Mackin suggested the town examine a product called “Bio Pure” as an alternative to delivered fossil fuel. Mr. Johnson suggested Ms. Mackin forward the committee more information on the product.

Ms. DeLai noted that she has spent a considerable time this past month extensively researching and continually monitoring federal and state grants pursuant to IJJA and IRA specifically, as well as residential and commercial tax credits. She will also be looking for ways to engage residents (particularly seniors) and small business owners regarding energy efficiency and decarbonization opportunities.

Ms. DeLai also reported that the Town Manager informed her that he would be including the funding for the CRM position in the proposed FY24 budget.

Mr. Johnson inquired as to the status of the erroneous National Grid invoices for the winter of 2022. Ms. DeLai reported that she had met with National Grid two weeks ago but had not heard anything back yet. Mr. Johnson requested that we contact Joanne Bissetta at DOER about National Grid’s lack of response to our HS/MS gas billing issue. Ms. DeLai recommended that she give Lori Timmerman of National Grid until the end of the week to respond. If she did not respond, Ms. DeLai will send an email to Ms. Timmerman with a cc to Ms. Bissetta at DOER.

#### 4) CRC initiatives

##### i) Town Standing Committee

Ms. Britt gave an update on the meeting that she, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Nysten, and Ms. DeLai had with Mr. Crane, Ipswich Town Manager. Ms. Britt suggested she collect feedback from the group and then convene another meeting with Mr. Crane once the proposal was finalized. Mr. Johnson suggested that Ms. Britt ask people about some of the constraints and challenges with the committee as currently structured and if there are other issues

people are seeing and options that people suggest we implement to address those issues, in preparation for continued discussions.

ii) Specialized Stretch Code

Ms. Britt updated the Committee on the two new stretch codes that have come into play this year. The new Stretch code went into effect for those that are Green Communities on January 1. The Specialized Opt-In Stretch Code is something cities and towns can adopt. Two have done so thus far (Brookline and Watertown), another twenty or so communities are considering it for spring adoption.

Ms. Britt gave a brief overview of the difference between the stretch and specialized stretch code. Both have similar requirements for building envelop, specialized has higher efficiency requirements. Specialized stretch allows fossil fuel but building has to be wired for future electrification. Ms. Britt referenced information showing that the life cycle costs associated with a heat pump are less than or equal to fossil fuel heating and cooling system alternatives. She is meeting with different stakeholders to surface the issues that different groups might have with adoption of the specialized code. She has dates in March for a presentation to Rotary. Ms. Britt asked that Committee members review the presentation she shared and give her feedback. If Committee members know anyone in the building and construction industries in the area, Ms. Britt asked that we connect her to those folks so she can speak more with them about the issues and concerns.

5) New Business

a) Proposed Gloucester zoning rule changes for climate resiliency

There was a brief discussion of the new zoning rule that Gloucester is looking to adopt that would place more significant restrictions on buildings in the coastal floodplain. Ms. Britt has been in touch with Gloucester planning director and will report out at our next meeting.

6) Ongoing Initiatives

a) Public Safety Building Committee Updates

Ms. DeLai reported that the schematic design phase of the project has been completed and the project is now moving into design development based on a vote of the committee at the end of December. Because the initial cost estimates associated with the building came in significantly over the approved budget (by some \$4 - \$5 million), the building committee was forced to reduce the size of the building from 31,000 square feet to 26,500 square feet. Ms. DeLai reported that the schematic design estimate is based on a fully electric building with heating and cooling provided by an air source heat pump.

Mr. Johnson asked if the MEP team has confirmed that the air source heat pump will work at lower temperatures and will not require the addition of a supplemental fossil fuel fired heating system. Ms. DeLai reports that this is what she has been told by the MEP team as of November. Mr. Nysten reported that he heard Jamie Fay report at a Finance Committee meeting that the design team is unsure if the air source heat pump will be able to handle the colder temperatures without a supplemental system. Mr. Johnson emphasized the importance of getting this commitment from the design team in writing prior to finalizing the design.

Ms. DeLai reported that, in support of this project, she is currently researching available rebates, incentives, tax credits, and grants. She has had preliminary meetings with National Grid and ELD to discuss potential rebates and incentives. In her initial meeting with National Grid, Ms. DeLai reports that they are stating we are ineligible for the new construction incentive, on the heat pump adder (\$800 per ton for air source heat pumps and \$4,500 per ton for ground source heat pumps). Ms. DeLai inquired as to why Ipswich would be treated differently than Wellesley. The National Grid representative stated that they would review our situation with upper management and contact us once they were able to clarify the different treatment. Ms. DeLai reported that she will need to work with the design team and ELD to determine an appropriate basis for an ELD incentive package for this new municipal construction project.

Ms. DeLai also reported that her preliminary analysis shows that available rebates, incentives, and taxes could reduce the cost differential between an air source heat pump system and a geothermal system by as much as 75%. She stated that much depends on how the tax code defines the energy property – just wells and heat transfer or also distribution and terminal end units. Ms. DeLai provided a memo to the Town Manager outlining her preliminary findings and analysis and hopes to distribute the information to the Public Safety Building Committee and the CRC later this month.

b) Energy Savings Performance Contracting

Ms. DeLai reported that the RFQ responses were due January 10<sup>th</sup> and that we received responses from 5 (marquis) ESCO firms. Unfortunately, one firm did not meet minimum qualifications (submitted wrong pricing form) and were disqualified. The evaluation team, which includes Carl, Jon Blair, Rachael Belisle-Toler, Chris Rais, and me, met with Beth Greenblatt, our OPM consultant on 12/15 to review the evaluation process. The evaluation team is now reviewing and evaluating responses. They are scheduled to complete evaluations by January 27 and meet on Feb 1 to review and narrow to finalists to interview. Interviews to be held on February 15. Ms. DeLai stated that she hopes to negotiate and award contract by 3/1 and commence audits immediately, with goal to be prepared with a warrant article by mid-August, 2023.

c) Electric School Bus Initiative

Ms. DeLai reported that the last meeting with Beacon Transportation was on December 7. At that time, we requested that Beacon do further analysis to let us know the ideal location and size of parcel for a clean bus charging depot, what ownership model they prefer, and terms of a contract if we were to proceed with requiring electric buses. Ms. DeLai reported that there is an interesting opportunity here is for Ipswich and ELD to consider constructing and hosting a regional clean bus charging depot on town owned land. Ms. DeLai noted that the existing school bus contract will likely be extended for the 2023-24 school year, giving us more time to plan and evaluate, and that the next meeting is being planned for in early February (waiting for new School Department Director of Finance to begin).

Mr. Nysten made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Johnson. Meeting adjourned at 7:03 PM.