

**Town of Ipswich
Climate Resiliency Committee
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Tuesday, Mar. 16, 2021 at 6:30 pm**

Present (members): Mike Johnson, Co-Chair; Chub Whitten; Rex Bradford, Dylan Lewellyn; Michele Hunton; Marianna Mattin; Jamie Donovan; Jon Blair; Marc Simon; Hannah Wilbur; Carl Nylan; Tony Marino; Carolyn Britt, Co-Chair, Becky Love

Call to Order

Mike Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:35pm

Mike discussed the new process of distributing information. Rather than send information via email, meeting materials will be posted on the Google site. All members were encouraged to verify that they had access.

Review of Minutes

At 6:38pm, Carl Nylan made a motion to approve the minutes from February's meeting, which was seconded by Michele Hunton. The motion passed unanimously

Becky was commended for keeping such professional minutes.

A new, revolving schedule was introduced to allow the duty of recording secretary to be shared.

CRC Subcommittee Reports

Mike asked for updates from the subcommittees at 6:39pm

Solar Working Group: Rex reported that the Solar Working Group was continuing to meet on the first Tuesday of each month. Through their March meeting, the group was focused on researching various program opportunities. Jon and Dylan focused primarily on comparisons against other municipal light departments, while Marc, Marty, and Rex concentrated on understanding new incentives that might be introduced.

One such incentive might look like the program conducted by Green Mountain Power, in which Tesla Powerwall batteries are subsidized by the utility with an agreement to use them for peak power reduction. Mike asked if the ELD had visibility on battery installations, to which Dylan replied that it was a field on the solar application and could also be documented if enrolled in the ELD's "Connected Homes" program.

Another important element under investigation is the access to capital to allow customers from all income levels to invest in solar arrays; various financing partners and opportunities are being pursued. Together the group was hoping to deliver a comprehensive recommendation to the greater CRC at the June meeting.

Mike inquired about PACE financing, which allows commercial entities to borrow money for energy efficiency upgrades to their property and pay it off via their tax bill. Dylan provided a brief overview of the program and said that a meeting had been conducted with the Town Manager, Planning Director, Assessor, Treasurer, and ELD staff in January to learn more about the viability of the program in Ipswich. Jon said that the program seemed feasible for implementation, but he was waiting for the right time to bring the proposal to the Select Board for a formal vote of adoption.

Education and Outreach Committee: Michele said that she continued to meet with Becky, Hannah, and Marianna and they are now working under the "Education and Outreach" moniker. Hannah stated that one of their early priorities involves updating the website. Carolyn recommended adding a section on the website that provided definitions for common, relevant terms. The group is also planning to establish a dedicated town webpage that serve as a repository or hub for relevant links to other sources, like the ELD's rebate and incentive webpage. Jon encouraged the Committee to make recommendations to other

Commented [MJ1]: I thought this subcommittee was calling themselves the "Communication Subcommittee".

departments or groups, if they found the referenced websites to be unclear or incomplete. Additionally, the group is considering the possibility of developing a third webpage that would be specific to Green Communities benefits and opportunities.

Marc asked about getting physical signs indicating the Ipswich is a Green Community, in order to spread awareness. The group concurred that this would be a good idea; Tony said he would look into it. Mike also mentioned installing a bigger sign at common idling spots, like the schools' pick-up/drop-off areas. Michele stated that the group was planning to meet with representatives from the Ipswich Police Department to develop pamphlets about the no-idling law. Chub stated that the schools were returning to in-person learning in early April; therefore, he recommended accelerating the public awareness campaign, since a significant increase in student drop-offs and pick-ups was expected as a result of reduced bus capacity.

Mike asked about drafting a letter to the editor of local publications to discuss CRC's progress and objectives. Michele recommended waiting until the website was updated before sharing information with the local news outlets, that way the website could be referenced as a useful resource for additional information in the article.

Zero Carbon Resolution Implementation Plan

At 7:12pm, Mike opened a dialogue about the implementation plan for the recently approved Zero-Carbon Municipal Resolution

Mike began by stating that he and Jon had discussed a reduced questionnaire for the municipal staff. He said Jon's feedback was to use a phased approach to get immediate input on imminent vehicle or building projects, rather than risk missing opportunities while conducting a more complete engagement with municipal decision-makers. Rex said he liked the abbreviated version and Tony said he could get it out to all Town Department Heads in early April.

Carl Nylen recommended adding "contracts" to vehicle purchase and leases. This would cover items like school bussing or snow plowing contracts that might otherwise be missed.

Carolyn was concerned that some town departments might pay bills but not make decisions. For example, the Building Inspector might pay for the expense of gas, but not be responsible for purchasing the Code Enforcement vehicle. It was agreed that all potential gaps or double-counting should be properly addressed. Michele and Carolyn brought up using other references, like utility bills, to ensure nothing was missed; Jon agreed and mentioned the insurance scrolls for vehicles might be useful to crosscheck vehicle ownership.

Hannah suggested that formatting might be worth considering to allow for more efficient processing after questionnaires are received. Specifically, she mentioned that online surveys or fillable pdfs might be worth pursuing. Jon agreed that such techniques would be very useful for phase 2 of the questionnaires, but might not be necessary for the abbreviated phase 1 responses.

School Facilities Working Group

At 7:30pm, Carl segued into upcoming capital planning for long range electrification of the Middle/High School building

Carl stated that he was meeting with the Ipswich Schools Superintendent, Facilities Department, ELD, and others to figure out more details about implementing electrification and adding rooftop solar. Chris Rais talked about assessments that were being conducted to support the dialogue including HVAC and solar.

Other Business

At 7:39pm Carolyn introduced the grant-funded "net zero roadmap", sponsored by MAPC

Carolyn suggested that the CRC establish a dedicated subcommittee to answer the initial questions for the program worksheet and to shepherd the roadmap forward. Jamie volunteered; Jon committed to having a representative from the ELD on the subcommittee, but indicated that he would have to consider who would be the best fit, based on availability.

Green Communities

At 7:50pm, Tony provided an update about the upcoming Green Communities grant options

Tony said they were staying engaged to make sure all funds were used for the current grant year. Looking ahead to future years, he thought there might be a large project that would warrant special treatment (e.g. combining of grant years); one example might be a geothermal heating system for the proposed Public Safety Facility and/or the Middle/High School. Carl mentioned several projects at the two elementary schools that might warrant Green Communities funding. Chris provided more detail on those projects, which included converting HVAC blowers and multiple LED lighting projects.

Other Business

At 7:58pm Carolyn called for any new business to be presented to the group

Carolyn stated that there are at least four successful electric buildings in the Town of Lexington, which resulted from a similar Climate Resolution. Perhaps the CRC should connect with representatives from Lexington to understand how Ipswich can learn from their success.

Carolyn also mentioned that a concerning citizen's petition was being brought to Town Meeting. The petition involved prohibiting "climate change" as justification for municipal investments and expenses. Mike responded that he was aware of the proposal, but recommended "not giving it any oxygen". Tony echoed that sentiment and indicated that he didn't think the petition would get much support from Select Board or the Finance Committee.

Adjourn

At 8:01pm, Tony Marino motioned to adjourn, which was seconded by Michele Hunton. The motion passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned: 8:01 pm

Next meeting: April 20, 6:30pm