

ORLEANS TOWN CLERK
Tracy Higgins
MAR 10 12:50 PM

APPROVED at the March 9th ECAC Committee meeting

Energy and Climate Action Committee

Minutes January 12, 2023

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

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

Select Board Representative: Michael Herman

Guest: Alan McClennen, Chair, Board of Water and Sewer Commission

Virtual Guest: Allen Giles

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

There were no announcements.

After a few corrections, the minutes from the November 10, 2022 meeting were approved unanimously.

Developing a Renewable Energy Strategy

John Londa stated that we need to develop a renewable energy strategy for the town of Orleans. This would be a document that would be revised as we identify other projects for the town. He noted that the town's projects have all been done working with CVEC. However, there are other options for project development, and this is why Allen Giles is with us today. PowerOptions is a consortium that works as a third party entity to supply gas, electricity and solar development projects. They work with federal, state and municipal organizations. About one third of their business is with municipal organizations. The town of Orleans is not currently a member of PowerOptions. John stated that he has worked with Solect Energy in the past. PowerOptions uses Solect Energy exclusively as a vendor, for solar projects.

Allen Giles Presentation:

Allen Giles is associated with 2 organizations: PowerOptions and Solect Energy. PowerOptions is the largest energy buying consortium in New England and Solect Energy does no-cost solar and energy storage feasibility evaluations. Mr. Giles has been in the renewable energy business for about 20 years mostly on Cape Cod. He joined Solect last year to help them expand their renewable energy business. Solect started in 2008 as an engineering contract procurement company initially limiting their activities to commercial entities. Nine years ago, Solect replied to an RFP from PowerOptions to become a solar installation vendor for PowerOptions members and were selected. They have done many projects for universities in the state. They are currently working with Cape Cod Community College and on a project for one of the public schools in Falmouth. He was contacted by John Londa who requested that he meet with our committee to describe the services he provides. He oversees the development of proposed contracts prior to their submission to the town boards and voters. Once they establish a price for a contract, it is locked in for the duration. Town membership costs for PowerOptions is only a few hundred dollars. At the end of the contract period, Solect Energy dismantles and removes the equipment. Additional costs for special aspects of any project are pre-negotiated.

PowerOptions serves non-profit organizations and municipalities. They account for about 75-80% of Solect Energy's business. PowerOptions operates in the same manner as Cape light Compact. The energy price remains fixed throughout the life of the contract with Solect. The only risk is the failure of Solect to supply sufficient energy due to the lack of available sunlight. The Solect annual energy forecasts have been accurate to within 2% in the recent past. The vendors used by Solect are financially stable organizations; consequently, if an equipment failure occurs, the equipment will be replaced by the vendor.

There were some detailed technical and financial questions asked of the guest. Without getting into details, he reminded us that the purpose of meeting with our committee was to let us know about the services provided by PowerOptions in conjunction with Solect Energy.

MOTION

Hakim Janah made a motion to adopt the renewable energy strategy that was recommended by John Londa at our previous meeting. It was noted that this strategy can be updated as other developments and opportunities arise. The motion was seconded by Roger McDaniel and passed with 7 yeas and 1 abstention by Martin Culik.

Installing solar panels in The Water Shed Area

Mark Berson, a member of the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners, met with our committee at its previous meeting. He wanted our committee to support an effort to explore renewable energy (solar panels) in the town's Water Shed. Following his suggestion, a few members of our committee subsequently toured the area. Alan McClennen, attended our meeting to brief us on the history and feasibility of renewable energy generation in the watershed area.

On August 1, 1962, the Town of Orleans took 490 acres of land by eminent domain for water purposes. Orleans is the only town in this area to have a watershed area. Anything we do on this land must support the production of water. Therefore, the question is: can we do something at that site that reduces the costs to produce water for the town of Orleans? In 2004-2005 there was a proposal to put a wind turbine on this site. At a subsequent town meeting, the proposal was defeated. Consequently, that turbine went to Falmouth where it was recently de-commissioned.

Paul Cass stated that leakage of toxic substances from the solar panels is an important consideration. This may not be true, any longer. The town was told that, in the past, placement of solar panels on the watershed area was not allowed. David Jacobson said that one possible site would be a part of this land that is close to some industrial land and to Route 6 and is outside the well head protection area.

All electricity generated by solar on this land must be used strictly for water production. The committee needs to establish how much power is required for water production. Susan stated that we do not know very much detail about any restrictions on the use of this land or the power requirements for the water pumps. She suggested that we should talk to appropriate employees of the water department to get further information. Alan suggested that the people we should contact are Ron Collins and Sue Brown to find out the KW hours used at the water plant. Roger McDaniel offered to write up some questions and ask Sue Brown for answers. The committee agreed to wait until more information was gathered.

Inflation Reduction Act

Hakim Janah contacted our DOER liaison, Lisa Sullivan to discuss what the impact of the IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) would have on renewable energy projects. She said that technical studies could be candidates for funding. She said it was important to have liaison staff to interact with federal officials. That person should be knowledgeable in both available funding and community needs. Hakim discovered two interesting websites related to this topic: RewiringAmerica.org and nlc.org. These websites contained information regarding projects that would be eligible for funding under the IRA. RewiringAmerica.org has a feature called Direct Pay which is dedicated to tax exempt organizations such as municipalities like us. Direct Pay describes what types of projects would be available for funding – for example – upgrading fire engines to ones that are electric, they could get up to a \$40,000 grant. Also adding solar panels to a school facility would also be eligible.

EV Charging Stations

The next topic discussed was electric vehicles. Susan and John met with the Director of Public Works and Ron Collins. They indicated that a preferred location for charging stations would be the lower parking lot of Nauset Beach. They recommended the use of six parking spaces and three level 2 charging units which would support charging for 2 cars each. The funding sources for this project could be some of the unexpended Green Community Funds. The cost to the town would be about \$6,500 if available grants and offsets are implemented.

David Jacobson spoke with Kate Vantella, of Cape Light Compact about a staff position to support renewable energy committee projects in Brewster. Approaching Green Communities for funding of a part time position may be a possibility. Martin Culik informed us that the town of Barnstable has recently hired a Director of Sustainability which is a full-time position. Michael Herman suggested that this position might be for the outer cape region rather than just Orleans. David Jacobson agreed to write a job description for this position which we will discuss at our next meeting.

Susan Chandler announced that we have been asked by the outer Cape Energy Committees to support a Cape Electric Vehicle Expo in Hyannis this Spring. Paul Cass volunteered to represent our committee on the planning committee. The second announcement was about implementing the new MA. Specialized Energy Code (aka a new stretch code.) The state has increased its energy efficient requirements for new buildings, municipalities and commercial buildings. This is an effort to get ready for full electrification of buildings. Orleans will automatically renew the existing stretch code, since we are a Green Community. Bob Higgins Steele, from the Outer Cape Energy Committees is encouraging all of the towns to adopt the more stringent stretch code. This will take a by-law revision and must be passed at Town Meeting.

Roger McDaniel agreed to meet with Bob Higgins Steele.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin Clements