



NORTHAMPTON ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

MINUTES

February 10, 2026 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

Location: HybridMeeting, City Council Chambers, 212 Main St.

Voting Members Present: Carolyn Misch, Ben Weil, Louis Hasbrouck, Angie Gregory, Gwenevra Lodi Nabad, and Christopher Caleb Stratton

4:00 PM Carolyn Misch opened the meeting with public comment.

Public Comments: Please see below.

AGENDA

- Public comment period – none
- Review/Approve Minutes – Angie Gregory moved to approve, seconded by Gwen Nabad. Minutes approved unanimously
- Pollinator Subcommittee Update - Angie Gregory met with the Environmental Club to talk about next steps. They plan to focus on signage, maintaining, and presenting on what they have already established. Creating landscape manuals for residents is also a possibility. They would like to engage more students in the work that Tree Northampton is doing. Gwen Nabad suggested they connect with the Mass Pollinator Network.
- Neighborhood Electrification Effort Strategy Discussion - Denise Lello from Mothers Out Front discussed streets that have been identified for gas pipeline replacement due to leaks. Gas leaks are expensive and costly, and new pipelines could be obsolete as electrification increases. As more households electrify, the cost of pipe replacement falls on the remaining gas customers. Gas companies do not want to lose their customer base but electrifying homes is cheaper than replacing pipeline. Households could be electrified neighborhood by neighborhood so gas pipes can be retired. The pipeline on Olive St in Northampton will need to be replaced due to leak history. Replacement will start in April and will cost \$1.5 million. Eversource wants to extend pipeline on Adair Street and Hillside street. Replacing pipelines and adding new pipelines is somehow profitable for gas companies.
- Ryan Rd. ES PV Project Update - City Council approved the spending for this project. We need to use different modules, so a new price will be provided. The design might change, but we may be able to get an additional 10% investment tax credit back if we use domestic content. It is possible we will end up with a price that is similar to what was originally proposed. The structural analysis happened last week so the new price and design should be provided soon.
- Response to last month's Agenda Prioritization brainstorm - Valley Green Energy transparency could be added to the agenda every month or so. NESC could be involved with stormwater management, however the stormwater utility is not under NESC's jurisdiction. CAPA could regularly provide updates on EV chargers. The topic of Community solar and low income resident participation would need more research at the staff level. In order to go beyond focusing on municipal transition from fossil fuels, there could be a committee that brainstorms what the next

program could be, like Solarize or electrification. Providing increased publicity on what NESC and the City does is a capacity issue, but we can continue to brainstorm how we can do that. For regulating gas powered landscaping equipment or addressing the impact of such equipment, there will be an educational event this summer. We could also look at city policy changes and potentially legislation. Other issues such as REC's, the building code related to solar, and bus service expansion, are topics that can be addressed on future agendas. Later in the year, organic waste can be discussed. Carolyn Misch applied for capital money to do an update on the bicycle pedestrian plan. There could be planning outside of NESC that could look at the transportation network later in the year if there is funding. NESC could help with a plan for the Resiliency hub, but it is a bigger topic that includes more departments and entities than just NESC. Chriss Stratton would like to discuss ebikes.

- Discussion of REC's with particular recommendation regarding Valley Green Energy (vote) - Ben Weil discussed the Valley Green Energy 3 tiers of energy supply prices. The standard offer has 10% additional RECs, while another option has 100% RECs. Most people did not make an option, so they got put on Standard. Currently there are no RECs available for the utility to buy, so they do the alternative compliance payment, which raises the price of the electricity we pay (not the supply, but the National Grid delivery). Until more RECs become available, it is proposed that we should automatically shift all VGE standard accounts to the VGE Basic option, which is no more RECs required by law. It will save people \$. In November, the solicitation for new pricing begins, so we could wait for that, or we could automatically shift people now. Chris Stratton recommends informing customers of the change somehow. National Grid cannot add an advisory, however the supplier First Light could. Angie Gregory suggests the City also notifies residents and that residents have a choice to opt down. Motion by Ben Weil to automatically shift all VGE standard accounts to a VGE Basic account, seconded by Chris Stratton, passed unanimously. Residents will be notified of the changes.
- Department head updates - none.

5:30 pm. Upon motion by Gwen Nabad and second by Chris Stratton, the committee voted to adjourn.

Voting Members: Carolyn Misch, Vice Chair • Katie Deppen • Gwenevra Lodi Nabad • Building Department (Louis Hasbrouck) • Christopher Caleb Stratton • Richard Parasiliti • Tim Smith • Ben Weil • Angie Gregory • Eric Winkler • Rachel Flynn-Kasuba

Staff advisor, non-voting: Energy and Sustainability Officer, Gabriella Fox

