



NORTHAMPTON ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

APPROVED MINUTES

MAY 27, 2021

4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Location: Virtual meeting

Members present: Wayne Feiden, Chair, David Pomerantz, Vice Chair, Louis Hasbrouck, Alex Jarrett, Rachel Maiore, Adin Maynard, Ashley Muspratt, Richard Parasiliti, Ben Weil, and Chris Mason (non-voting).

Wayne Feiden opened the meeting and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

Public comment period: Adele Franks: The Massachusetts' Energy Efficiency Advisory Council is now taking comments on the utilities' draft 3-year MassSave plans. Suggests that commissioners may wish to submit comments as individuals or, if there is enough time, as NESC. Sharon Moulton recommended a new report from Climate XChange that describes the benefits of climate friendly employment in Massachusetts and suggested that Climate XChange may be able to help with analysis regarding climate change for City projects. She will send more information on this to Chris and Wayne.

Review/approve minutes of 4/29/21 meeting: Alex moved and David seconded a motion to approve the minutes from the April 2021 NESC meeting. Motion passed unanimously with two abstentions.

Recommendation on Picture Main Street: Ben: has looked at this in more depth since the last meeting. Complemented Wayne on the detailed presentation on the city's web site. Congratulates the mayor, planning board etc. on selecting option #3. He hopes the NESC will consider and vote on some further improvements, e.g. more space for non-vehicular use. Louis: This has been 10 years in the making. Last minute changes would just slow it down. It is already a compromise and suggested alterations would have to be aimed at details. Wayne: summarizes the 3-lane decision. The number of lanes is the major decision and leaves room for tweaking the details of the plan. Ben: Since the 1990s, and during our 10 year planning process, other communities have implemented road diets and we can learn from them. E.g., Middle lane doesn't always serve a purpose. In places it could be used differently. Particularly for cyclists. There are reference materials that he could share. Tweaking the angled parking can enable other green features to be added. Alex: Middle lane seconds as snow storage, emergency pass through, helps traffic flow past someone parking. Green space and shade benefits are already in there. Maybe we could add an occasional tree to the middle lane. Wayne: some features will be easy to adjust post-construction, some would cost a lot of money. E.g., moving the curb would cost a lot. Ben: This is a good reason to maximize non-auto space and base the curb location on that. Chris suggested someone move a motion so we can direct the discussion toward a specific output. *Ben moved, Rachel seconded and both accepted several friendly amendments, which led to a vote on a motion of support by the NESC for three lanes on Main Street, directing people to side street and off street parking, maximizing space for trees and people, including a cycle track, and future-proofing for electric vehicles justified by long term resilience and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the heat island effect.* Motion passed unanimously. Rachel would like to see pedestrian/bicycle-only times for downtown. Adin: it is important to build a culture of cycling with equity and broad accessibility.

Voting Members: Wayne Feiden, Chair • David Pomerantz, Vice Chair • Jonathan Flagg • Alex Jarrett • Rachel Maiore • Adin Maynard • Gordon Meadows • Ashley Muspratt • Richard Parasiliti • Tim Smith • Ben Weil

Staff advisor, non voting: Chris Mason

Discuss most effective and strategic NESC roles: Wayne: how does the commission develop a strategic plan for implementing the CRRP? We could address this over a few meetings or aim to cover this in one dedicated meeting. Rachel: In one meeting. David: In one meeting but start with a bullet list. Louis: suggests we each provide ideas for a bullet list ahead of time.

Wayne: Open meeting law may go back to in-person. That would allow for a minority of commissioners to call in as long as a quorum is present in-person. Does the NESC wish to keep a Zoom option once we go back? Louis: less people driving cars. Ashley: Both options are good. Rachel: allowing call-in will allow more people to attend. Ben: Members should RSVP on whether they can be present in person. Alex: we can accept remote public comment at start of meeting. Adin: Any time we can increase public input is good. We could use a public comment sign-up sheet. Chris: The NESC has never had so many comments as to suggest a sign-up sheet is needed. Wayne: we can experiment.

Review Forest and Soils Carbon: Ashley: The CRRP appendix, Carbon Sequestration in Forests and Soils, has two parts. Part 1 describes ways to foster CO2 sequestration in forests and soils. Part 2 discusses how to measure and possibly monetize the carbon capture. She quickly went over the document. Wayne: he will send out a copy once Ashley responds to and incorporates changes from an initial review. David: Kudos Ashley & this could very well be helpful to other communities. Rich: Thanks Ashley. Can't wait to read it.

Roundhouse parking lot lighting plan: Alex reported that he had spoken with David, Chris and James Lowenthal about the Roundhouse Lot lighting assessment (attached to minutes) provided by a group calling themselves Northampton City Lights. The assessment questions whether the current lighting plan follows zoning and the recent NESC-endorsed five outdoor lighting principals. He suggested that it may be helpful to visit parking lots that Northampton City Lights agrees meet those five principles as it can be hard to visualize the effects of lighting from photographs. David: rebuilding the Roundhouse parking lot is aimed at addressing a broad array of goals. E.g., increase capacity, provide EV chargers, accommodate changes to the bike path and create uniform lighting. The project is currently out to bid. The current lighting plan addresses safety and efficiency (i.e., low power LEDs) but it doesn't mean we are locked into the currently specified fixtures. The city is open to suggestions. The city is specifying dimmers for all lights once we checked with the Police Dept. Chris: Because the city's lighting code is so out of date, the City asked the lighting contractor to design the parking lot lights to the Dark Sky Association's and Illuminating Engineering Society's Model Lighting Ordinance, assuming it was designed to meet the five lighting principles.

The public weighed in. James Lowenthal: the NESC is doing good work. Janet Gross: Glad to hear about the dimmers. Please seize the day and do this right. Page Bridgens: she tends the pollination gardens in the park and is thrilled to hear that the city has contracted with a consultant do more pollinator planting. Artificial light contributes to insect die-off. There is potential here to do best practice of landscaping and night lighting. James: the current lot lighting plan has all the same problems as lighting in Pulaski Park. The DSA/IES model ordinance is obsolete and wasn't built on the five principles. No evidence that the lighting designer followed the five principles. Approves of Alex's idea of a night walk to see samples of approved lot lighting (e.g. Clark School, Some Smith College lots)

Ben: With LEDs you can put the light source where you want it. Fixtures don't have to be so tall. Make them shorter and put in more to cover the same area. He looked over the lighting plan specs. Imagine lighting at one meter. We would need 130 dimmer fixtures versus 22 brighter fixtures but total power

consumption will be less. This idea can be adjusted – pick your height. David: once the city opens bids and determines funding, then we can look at adjusting lighting. James: You wouldn't need to increase the number of fixtures, just put in shielded lights at a lower height. Rachel: thinking beyond this project, where should the city house lighting decisions for review?

Commissioner's Reports: No reports.

Ongoing City Department Projects Status: Chris: for the net-zero capital investment planning project, C&H Architects presented on task 2: feasibility assessment, and provided draft written reports for the seven buildings, which we are currently reviewing. We are in the process of signing contracts for indoor lighting upgrades in the last city-owned buildings. Northeast Solar's assessment of putting PV arrays on Bridge St., Ryan Rd and Leeds schools is looking good. Next step is an on-site structural check. On paper assessment looks good, but doesn't cover everything. We have received one quote, and expect others soon, for design of an air-source heat pump/energy recovery ventilation upgrade for the old section of Leeds School. The joint effort between Northampton, Amherst and Pelham has selected a broker to help with community choice aggregation (CCA) launch and power purchase and a lawyer, paid by a state grant, is looking over a final draft of a joint powers agreement between the three communities.

Rich: planted 123 trees, 35 in South St. neighborhood with a goal of 400 more. Our aim is 2000 by 2015. Put in a request for quote for an electric mower. Looking to change over all gas-powered mower equipment. Announced that Masonic St lot will be closed for construction over the next few weeks.

Wayne: besides Picture Main St., about to go out to bid on Pleasant St., bicycle and pedestrian lanes. Florence plant boxes and Connecticut River greenway tree planting.

Action Items:

- Commissioners may wish to look over utility three year plans and comment.
- Wayne to send out Ashley's carbon sequestration appendix
- Commissioners to review carbon sequestration appendix

The Committee adjourned at 5:35 PM.