



NORTHAMPTON ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

APPROVED MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 23, 2021

4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Location: Virtual meeting

Members present: Wayne Feiden, Chair, David Pomerantz, Vice Chair, Alex Jarrett, Rachel Maiore, Gordon Meadows, Ashley Muspratt, Richard Parasiliti, Ben Weil

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

Critical business (minutes, public comment, emergencies):

Public comment - Lilly Lombard felt the commission dismissed the input from a member of the public at the last NESC meeting and did not give that person an opportunity to respond to comments. She encouraged the commission to treat input with curiosity.

Review/approve minutes of 8/26/21 meeting: Alex moved and David seconded a motion to approve the minutes from the August 2021 NESC meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Wayne announced that the City is working with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) to identify ways to insert consideration of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission impacts into the City's capital improvement planning process. While that work is just beginning and no final decision has been made, the City has inserted questions on how each capital improvement request will effect climate resilience and regeneration.

Wayne announced that the City has reached out to the City's contractor to determine options to incorporate a district heat corridor in the Main St redevelopment project. May ask for use of revolving fund at next meeting because time is critical. Asked if Chris had any updates.

Chris reported that the city has been awarded \$100,000 grant to support attic insulation and design of an energy recovery ventilation and air source heat pump HVAC system for the old portion of Leeds Elementary School. And \$106,000 to install 6 dual-port EV charging stations.

Mission statement- is this what we are and what we strive to be?

- “The Energy and Sustainability Commission shall advise and assist the City in identifying, developing, implementing, and managing programs and policies for achieving energy efficiency and energy resource sustainability, and guard against effects of energy resource disruption/depletion and climate change in all of Northampton's public and private sectors (e.g., municipal, business, commercial, residential, agricultural, and institutional). The commission shall advise and assist with achieving the goals of the Sustainable Northampton Plan, the City's climate change protection commitments, and other City plans/goals. The Energy and Sustainability Commission is an advisory multiple-member body of the City.” –Northampton Administrative Code, Section 11

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

Staff advisor, non voting: Chris Mason

Wayne asked for thoughts on changes, additions or clarifications. Explained historic emphasis on energy and mitigation and wondered about resilience versus regeneration balance of commission. Responses included: increase focus on adaptation, address land management, mission should be more general, don't remove energy focus, include social equity, commission should be able to get in early enough to offer advice on specific projects while also addressing long-range, systemic visions, advocate at state and regional level, approve spending from revolving fund, add a community organizer to the commission.

Wayne summed up what he heard. Pieces of the statement should include: systemic solutions but also specific advice on items that may fall through the cracks without getting bogged down, (don't overlap with other boards/commissions), stick with energy but balance statement between resilience and regeneration, social issues and work with partners. Commissioners appeared satisfied with this summation.

Wayne said he would word-smith the mission statement.

Advising the City (15 minutes):

- How can the commission be most effective and collaborative?
- The E&SC was established to advise the Mayor. Is that what we are doing or should do?
- What is most effective way to build collaboration and mechanisms that can be implemented?
- What is feedback loop to share outcomes of advice back to commission?

Wayne pointed out, to clear up confusion, that advising the Mayor only is not included in the ordinance.

Discussion included:

General communication – frustration that they don't hear how commissioner's advice is taken or if it is even heard; hear about topics too late to provide early strategic input,

Communication/connection with the mayor – need point person on sustainability (oversees all) who is in direct connection with mayor and with NESC; request Mayor to attend one, or all, NESC meetings; NESC sub-groups seeks audience with the mayor (goes to the mayor), chair reports back on communication with mayor; need to balance report-back vs., time to provide input.

Communication with department heads – cycle through presentations from heads of primary departments, what would make department heads want to attend? (what value would they get?), Wish to hear their visions, not just report out on projects.

Structure – NESC needs to be proactive, e.g., quarterly focus on specific areas, get onto City Council agenda, Gordon suggested a new agenda template (attached) and requested feedback at future meeting, more working time, limit report out time, use ad-hoc sub groups.

Wayne summarized: (1) NESC is most effective when it collaborates and adds value. Perhaps use small groups (one to several), at times all commissioners are needed. (2) Provide advice at all levels: mayor,

city council, state etc. (3) Find time for the mayor to attend. (4) chair can report out from meetings with the mayor.

Strategic focus, interests, and expertise:

- a. Regeneration/Mitigation and/or Adaptation/Resiliency
- b. Heaviest focus historically and by administrative code on energy
- c. What is the mix between “hot issues” that come up (e.g., lighting), in-depth analysis, strategic focus
- d. Are other issues we lightly touch our strategic focus and expertise (e.g. adaption/resilience, land use)

Discussion:

- a. & b. Agreement that focus must remain broad and include both. Need to prepare for expected changes driven by climate change.
- c. How do we pick our topics? Go through CRRP? Advise on where state & federal funds are used?
From CRRP, tart with big GHG emission sectors and identify what we have the most control over.

Discussion to be continued.

Next agenda: Start with discussion on strategic focus (e.g., how are we tackling the CRRP) then move to time-sensitive topics.

Action Items:

Wayne will word-smith a draft new mission statement.

The Committee adjourned at 6:00 PM.

NESC Draft Agenda

Announcements

Same as current

Public Comment

Same as current

Administration Briefing

Opportunity for Administration to brief the commission on current projects that are in the RFP Development stages.

Projects must be introduced to the commission in the pre-RFP stage of development. This will allow for the comments of the commission to be incorporated into this important stage of project development.

Follow up from previous meeting

Commissioners will report on their progress from the previous meetings assignment of responsibilities

Department Head Report

This will be a rotating report in order for department heads (DPW, Smith Voc, Tree Warden, etc.) to brief the commission on what their department is doing to promote Sustainability and improve energy efficiency.

Appointed Commissioner Briefing

This will be a rotating opportunity for appointed commissioners to brief the commission on potential means of improving the City's energy efficiency, resiliency, and sustainability practices.

Guest Subject Matter Expert

This will be an opportunity for the commission to hear from subject matter experts such as utility company representatives, Energy Service Companies, professors of related subjects, and other industries related to energy efficiency and sustainability

Second Public Comment

The public will have a second opportunity to comment on subjects covered in the meeting.

Assignment of Responsibilities

Commissioners will take responsibility for researching or otherwise working on current topics, and prepare to report back to the commission at the following meeting.