



NORTHAMPTON ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

APPROVED MINUTES

September 24, 2020

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

Location: Virtual meeting

Members present: Wayne Feiden, Chair, Alex Jarrett, Rachel Maiore, Adin Maynard, Gordon Meadows, 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: No public comments.

Review/approve minutes of 7/30/20 meetings: Alex Jarrett moved and Ashley Muspratt seconded a motion to approve the minutes of 8/27/20 meetings. – Rollcall vote, motion passed unanimously.

Climate Resilience and Regeneration Plan: Wayne asked for thoughts on how much time commissioners needed to review the latest version of the CRRP. The latest version had been sent out the night before but Wayne acknowledged that he hadn't gotten all past comments worked into it yet. He pointed out that the latest draft no longer describes low- or medium-case pathways for GHG emission reductions, only focuses on the high-case pathway and admits that even that is not enough – we need to do more.

Ashley asked if this version considered the City's effort to reach net-zero for city facilities by 2050. Wayne said we must include that. Chris opined that the GHG contributions from city facilities are probably on the order of a rounding error for city-wide emissions. The importance of the city working on its buildings is as much for leadership and symbolic reasons.

Gordon said he wanted to understand how many kWhs of renewable energy would be needed by the city once it converted all its facilities to heat pumps and then do that for city-wide and that he liked the changes he had seen so far in the CRRP. Chris said he could do that calculation for city-facilities based on current energy consumption but that the net-zero effort will include a strong energy use reduction piece, which would lower the ultimate need.

Wayne asked if the CRRP executive summary should include the first-year action plan?

Alex suggested that the NESC provide feedback to Wayne by October meeting and Wayne gets a new version back to the NESC by November meeting. Wayne asked if NESC wanted to give approval before or after the public hearing (i.e., should public hearing be between the Oct & Nov meetings?)

Various commissioners pointed out that they didn't see past NESC input reflected in the new version, albeit, they hadn't had much time yet to review the document. (E.g., the written input presented by a NESC working group during the November 2019 meeting, reduction/repair of products to keep them out of the waste stream and urban forestry.) Wayne explained that if a comment wasn't understood it wasn't

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

included and it is most helpful when actual language is suggested. Wayne pointed to page 63 in reference to urban forestry and said he would get back to Rich with where else urban forestry was worked into the new document.

Adin suggested that the NESC spend next meeting diving into specific input. Further discussion lead to an agreement to do this and to focus discussion on, the November 2019 meeting's written input, all subcommittee minutes and any new input organized in time for the next meeting. Members agreed to bring to this meeting specific language and/or suggested edits and identify who would need to be assigned to any actions. Ben and others advocated for highlighting/prioritizing for discussion actions that need a specific ordinance, policy or budgetary support.

Wayne asked for a deadline for him to turn around a new version of the CRRP. Commissioners decided on one week before NESC meetings.

Deciding on when to hold a public hearing was put off until the next meeting.

Commissioner's Reports: Report from the Transportation Sub-Committee: Alex moved and Adin seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the 9/2/20 subcommittee meeting. - Motion passed unanimously.

Alex reported that they had, reviewed the transportation sections of the CRRP and identified items they would suggest adding. Based on the previous discussion, they will now shape their ideas into suggested text for the next NESC meeting. Alex went over the Transportation meeting minutes (attached). They are suggesting breaking the topic into four subtopics (four modes of transportation), broadening each discussion and covering specific projects (e.g., Valley Bike Share) as a detailed action in each section.

Adin said he would like to see education and equity as common themes that run throughout all CRRP sections.

Expanded Polystyrene Ordinance: Rachel Maiore reported that the ordinance is currently with City Council's Community Resources subcommittee, which will bring in others to help review it for 1 to 2 more meetings. It will then go to Legislative Matters subcommittee, then to City Council for a vote.

Ongoing Projects Status, Energy & Sustainability Officer:

Chris reported on projects that have advanced a significant amount or in an important way:

Net-Zero Capital Improvement Plans

- The City has received 7 proposals, 6 of which met the initial minimum requirements to move onto city review. The reviewers expect to get through the review process by the 1st or 2nd full weeks of October, given reviewer's schedules and vacation times.

Resiliency Projects

- The City has received paperwork from the DOER for the Fire HQ and microgrid resiliency grant projects that had been awaiting grant extensions paperwork. The paperwork is in the form of new grant contracts. The city has requested a slight modification in some language that the DOER added to the grant contracts.

Steam rap repairs had been completed in Memorial and City Halls.

Wayne reported on projects that have advanced a significant amount or in an important way:

Current Planning & Sustainability transportation activities to make the city more walkable:

1. Main Street redesign- public forums in November (estimated)
2. North King Street roundabout (2021 construction)
3. Edwards Square bike path on-ramp (October 2020)
4. ValleyBike- four new stations 2021
5. Pleasant Street complete streets under design (Hockanum Road to Roundabout)

Current Planning & Sustainability housing issues to reduce carbon footprint of housing

1. Zoning changes to allow two family homes by right in all residential neighborhoods
2. Pending RFP for three surplus city parcels for affordable housing, with requirements for lower carbon footprint than required by building code

Current Planning & Sustainability resilience issues to respond to climate change

1. Pine Grove Golf Course restoration (Phase I) complete by the end of September
2. Planning for community resilience hub, as a dependable place for resources for chronic and acute stress periods (homelessness to storms). The city did not received the grant that had applied for but is working on other funding.

Adin asked what platform was being used to achieve lower carbon footprint in the three surplus city parcels. Wayne said it would be Passive House.

PACE Financing: Chris reported that he had reached out to Mass Development to ask if they can have a representative present to the NESCS sometime soon.

Action Items:

- Chris to set up time for Mass Development to present on C-PACE
- Wayne will email the current version of the CRRP to all commissioners as soon as he incorporates input.
- Commissioners to prepare for an efficient discussion of items to address in the CRRP at the Nov meeting.

Motion to Adjourn: Ashley moved, Rich seconded and the Commission voted to adjourn at 5:30 PM.

Northampton Energy & Sustainability Commission
APPROVED Transportation Sub-Committee Minutes

September 2, 2020
7:00 - 8:30 pm

Online meeting via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/95166977511?pwd=bTI3bmFFSUFkck14YzhKMUhYR1ZNdz09>

Meeting ID: 951 6697 7511

Passcode: 474014

Phone-in number: (929) 436-2866

Commissioner Contact: Alex Jarrett, ajarrett@northamptonma.gov

Present: Alex Jarrett, Adin Maynard, George Kohout, Sara Howard

Agenda:

1. Introductions (5 min)

George Kohout is chair of the Planning Board and president of Friends of Northampton Trails and Greenways. Adin Maynard serves on the Energy & Sustainability Commission and has a energy consulting business. Sara Howard is a city resident.

2. Discussion and brainstorm of high level transportation planning in Northampton, to inform the Climate Resiliency & Regeneration Plan (70 min)

Adin summarized the CRRP and explained its relationship to the Master Plan. The draft CRRP was released in 2019 and many commissioners on NESAC gave feedback that some items were missing and others were more specific. We reviewed the current Transportation section of the CRRP.

TRANSPORTATION 1A: Advance an equitable access transportation initiative.

How do we get there? We discussed the following issues:

- PVTA bus system and how that is supported? Frequency of use, sizing of vehicles. Pandemic's impacts on public transportation and the latest impact of that. Referencing PVTA in the context of the new reality. Ridership vs. coverage trade-off and what routes would increase ridership without losing critical coverage.
- Easy car rental and sharing – Zipcar is only available downtown.
- Educational campaign on whether it makes sense to buy a car or rent it. True cost of owning a car versus renting? Infographic. One car or two cars – how to encourage two-car families to go down to one. On-the-fly car sharing and carpooling. Entrepreneurial solutions. Criteria for what to encourage – Uber and Lyft have been shown to increase congestion. Commuter bulletin boards. How to encourage cultural shift toward sharing?

- A cultural shift in making public transit not just be for poor people. Enough frequency and coverage to be able to rely on it. Poor people are still using public transit in the pandemic but other people don't have to. People in need rely on their communities in many ways.
- Bike loans at U-Mass 5.

TRANSPORTATION 1B. Expand the ValleyBike bike share program

- There should be a section on bicycling and ValleyBike should be mentioned.
ValleyBike: can you build your life around using this transportation? ValleyBikes are not year-round so you can't. Can't count on it to commute, get groceries.
- Safer on road cycling, reconfiguring roads to accommodate cycling, making the bike trail network more available year-round: flooding, drainage, snow removal. Transitions from paths to roads and sidewalk are difficult. More complete integration of network.
- Bicycle safety curriculum in schools, good reference in Evanston, IL plan. Bicycle skills park for young children to educate and empower.
- City could support a bicycle co-op. Earn a bike, learn how to repair it. Other cities have done this. FNT will be exploring this idea.
- Celebrating our bike network, increasing our bike trail network to bring people to town. Recreational activities on the bike. What is our vision and brand and how do we become a feature that draws people in? Green themed business. This supports sustainability and vice-versa. Get Chamber of Commerce on board.

TRANSPORTATION 1C. Foster a city-wide transition to electric vehicles (EV)

- Promote electric shared vehicles. Municipal purchasing of electric vehicles. Educational campaign for future stimulus bill for EVs. Compare total cost of ownership of a gas car vs. EV. Charging for EV spots would enable acceptance of more of them.

TRANSPORTATION 2A Encourage development that is dense, mixed-use, and transit-oriented

- Parking. Will people walk 2 to 3 minutes from a parking spot to visit businesses? Large businesses are asking for too much parking, especially for their employees. Big Y has acres of parking that are unused. No incentives for large businesses to encourage their employees to commute without single occupancy car. Private and public sector need to encourage alternative transportation. Parking cash-outs, sharing parking initiatives.
- School transportation; anti-idling laws.
- Building: Increased allowance of higher-density residential buildings. For every residential unit you have to have a car spot. Incentive for not having a parking spot. Decoupling parking costs from the cost of housing. Incentives for reduced parking spots; how to counter NIMBYism and build public support for efficient land use?
- Tweak topic to be more about walkability.
- Expand on four main modes: walking, biking, public transit, motor vehicles. Integrate equity and education into each of these.

3. Wrap-up: next steps, action items (15 min)

We will report to NESC at the September 22, 2020 meeting and will schedule another Transportation Subcommittee meeting in October with more outreach.meeting September 22.