



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH NH
Portsmouth Energy Advisory Committee
Wednesday, November 6, 2024 at 6:30 pm

Meeting recording: <https://youtu.be/EsIcTHwwTKc>

Attending: Councilor John Tabor, Councilor Cook, Betsy Blaisdell, Kevin Charette, Herb Lloyd, Tom Rooney, Tracey Cameron, Peter Somssich, Ben D'Antonio. Staff: Peter Britz, Stephanie Seacord (recording secretary)

Roll call – Chair Tabor called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

1. **Chairman's Remarks** – Framing discussions on the potential of the Jones Ave. landfill site for a future solar array: Portsmouth's Climate Future climate action plan includes the action item to plan, design and build a solar installation to power municipal buildings. This site might work for that, but it depends on the aggregation of a number of 'hoops' that took Exeter's solar site 4 years – which is why PEAC looks forward to hearing from their representative. The decision would be based on:
 1. **Regulatory aspects** – what is the position of the Department of Environmental Services (DES) regarding the current designation for passive recreation and a change of use for solar.
 2. **Financial** – Portsmouth would need to consider its options: have a developer build a turnkey operation leased to the City, have the City bond to build and own the facility; leverage a behind-the-meter opportunity or adopt a power purchase agreement (the Jones Ave. site is ½ mile from Portsmouth High School and the Indoor Pool; ~~and maybe City could offer electric boat charging at the dock?)-~~
2. **POSTPONED:** Exeter Planning and Sustainability Director David Sharples - Exeter's experience building a 1.77 MW solar project on town landfill <https://www.exeternh.gov/planning-sustainability/177-mw-landfill-solar-array-project>

Tom asked what role PEAC would take in the discussion? Chair Tabor commented that the first step would be to collect the information to explore what it took for actual use, what best practices could be followed – then recommend to the council a motion seeking a feasibility assessment. The project would be a multi-year endeavor that would also require staff support.

Discussion:

1. **Regulatory aspects** –Peter Britz noted that the site is not up to current DES landfill standards for even passive recreation and that opening the discussion on change of use might have additional consequences. DPW is proposing providing better passive access by moving the fenceline so the perimeter is wider (no access currently permitted on the 9.6 acre capped landfill) – to test DES interest.
2. **Financial** – If the Council voted to invest in feasibility ReVision and other solar developers around the state would participate in a competitive process. Discussion about adding a small fee to the PCP rate to build a fund for projects the way water/sewer does so that any

project would not add to the tax bill. Tom reported that CPCNH requires the municipality to select one rate level – committee agrees that should not be Granite Basic and that this is probably not the year to do that. Many questions to consider in looking at other models: Lebanon preferred ownership over the turnkey model – but has a dedicated staff Energy Manager; Exeter bonded, but when the bond is paid off, who keeps the revenue? Bow leases and negotiated with the developer to build arrays on municipal rooftops. Councilor Cook asked when the City electrical contract comes up for renewal: now in a 3-year agreement @ 8 cents. Tough to beat broker rate though CPCNH now offers 1-year rather than 6-month commercial agreements for municipalities, which offers more stability.

Other solar options worth exploring: rooftops of municipal buildings: Community Campus, DPW building. Foundry Garage plan included that option but budget didn't allow. Councilor Cook noted an array at the Kansas City Airport parking garage that is hung from the side of the building. Skate Park pavilion. Future Outdoor Pool bathhouse. (Ben: Power corridors – Great Bog also has Fish & Game rights -- are not options per utility set back limits for swing and sag.) Chair: then the consideration would be funding: put in the CIP? Madbury water system array was effected as a situation where the solar power purchase agreement offsets the facility's power bill.

3. **Approval of Minutes** – October minutes approved on a motion by Ben D'Antonio, seconded by Peter Somssich.
4. **NREL/wind power for sewer plants** – Herb Lloyd provided the quick update that the City has provided information NREL requested (site maps, wind data, power bills, diesel backup generator info for all 3 sites) and expects a response soon.
5. **Old Business:**
 - **Green Challenge:** Stephanie Seacord, PIO provided each member with the new weatherproof yard pinwheel with the labeling Tom had suggested. PEAC reviewed the letter that will accompany the pinwheel (along with the CPCNH informational postcard) and noted the explanation about renewables should say opting up encourages CPCNH (not Eversource) to support renewable sources. Also eliminating the reference to nuclear power. The City has received notice from two opt-up customers – notice requesting names/addresses appears in the City Newsletter.
 - **Peter S. still awaiting billing confirmation that his solar 1.0 has been switched over to Community Power with the net metering credits – in accordance with advice from Mark Bollinger.**
 - **Kevin asked about the status of the EEI energy audit and Peter B. replied it is continuing.** including information on State and Federal funding opportunities. Brief discussion on how the \$68 million in IRA funding to the State will be distributed. The presentation from the October 2 meeting can be found here: <https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/sites/default/files/2024-10/EEI%20COP%20Energy%20Performance%20Presentation%20100224.pdf>
 - **Tracey reported 3 potential applicants at the NH Saves “Button Up” Workshop October 23 may be eligible.** – There were some technical difficulties but they've applied to host another workshop next fall, coordinated with the Library and Sustainability Committee.
6. Public comment – no public attending and no Zoom participation due to a scheduling error.
7. Adjourned at 7:30 pm

Next PEAC meeting: Wednesday, December 4 at 6:30 pm

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