



City of Ann Arbor

Meeting Minutes

Energy Commission

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
<http://a2gov.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Tuesday, February 14, 2017

6:00 PM

Larcom City Hall, 301 E Huron St, Second floor, City Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Appleyard called the meeting to order at 6:05pm

ROLL CALL

Approved

Present: 10 - Charles Hookham, Brigit Macomber, Mike Shriberg, Mark Clevey, Wayne Appleyard, Kenneth J. Wadland, Noah Levin, John Mirsky, Sarah Paleg, and Jason Frenzel

Absent: 1 - Shoshannah Lenski

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve agenda made by Wadland, seconded by Shriberg, and approved unanimously on a voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes made by Paleg, seconded by Mirsky, and approved unanimously on a voice vote.

[17-0371](#) Minutes of the January 10, 2017 Ann Arbor Energy Commission Meeting

Attachments: Energy Commission Minutes 1-10-17.pdf

Approved by the Commission and forwarded to the City Council due back on 4/3/2017

PUBLIC INPUT

No public comment.

ENERGY REPORT - NEWS FROM THE ENERGY OFFICE AND COMMISSIONERS

Staff suggested that Commission move its April meeting since it happens to fall over Passover holiday.

Energy Office staff updated on the recent library Sustainability Forums, DTE's collaboration with the city to promote their programs, and the city's collaboration with countywide weatherization program.

Commissioner Hookham shared news about the Dream Big documentary that he sponsored about engineers and energy, debuting February 17th. He also brought up the innovation center in downtown Jackson that offers a space to learn about smart technologies like micro grids and renewable energy. Vice Chair Mark Clevey suggested that the commission visit the innovation center.

Staff brought up the ongoing conversations with the University of Michigan's Dow student group to start a potential microgrid feasibility project for Ann Arbor.

Chair Appleyard talked about national renewable energy shifts both in supply from hydroelectric to wind within the US, as well as employment in the solar market for the state of Michigan.

Solar Tax Assessment Issues Update - Howard Lazarus, City Administrator

City Administrator Lazarus gave an update on solar taxation. He noted that there had been changes on inspections, permitting, and fees to make the process easier for those looking at getting solar. However, there are still hurdles to changing the city's taxation of new solar systems. The city has looked at collecting and then redistributing the taxes collected, but because the taxes are divided amongst three entities, administration would be very difficult. Instead, Administrator Lazarus suggested going to the state to exempt solar from assessments. Mirsky brought up the importance of implementing changes for both the current as well as future installed solar projects. Clevey touched on his briefings at different organizations that are interested in solar taxation and the commissioners preceded to discuss how different Michigan cities and counties have dealt solar taxing. Commissioners also addressed how taxation would decrease solar adoption in Ann Arbor and the need to pursue several paths even if the City will focus going through the state for a solution.

Solar Programs Update - Staff and Commissioners

Vice Chair Clevey gave a presentation on the potential for community solar projects in Ann Arbor. The presentation comes as Ann Arbor needs to increase solar installation numbers to meet the greenhouse gas targets set by the Climate Action Plan. Clevey pointed out that community solar allows for a certain level of flexibility for those interested in getting the benefits of solar but do not have the ability to install solar on their house. As it stands now, utilities pay wholesale and sell the electricity at market rates, but there are ongoing discussions at revising the numbers to reflect the true cost of community solar.

Recommendations from the presentation included informing interested parties in the City's legal position, the true cost of engagement, and the financial payback. There were also suggestions to look further into endorsing DTE's community solar program once true costs are determined, looking at behind the meter options, working with community solar partners, and installing community solar at the Ann Arbor water utility.

[17-0507](#) Resolution Authorizing a Commitment to Pursue Community Solar Options that are compatible with the City Council "Resolution Authorizing a Commitment to Making the City of Ann Arbor a Solar Ready Community"

Approved by the Commission and forwarded to the City Council due back on 5/8/2017

COMMITTEE UPDATES**Climate Action Plan**

Staff informed the Commission that the Climate Partnership website had engaged close to one-thousand people, along with 400 likes on Facebook.

Renewable Energies

Staff informed the Commission that there has been interest from the public in the month preceding the launch of the new solar program (A2 Solar Club). Currently all the details are being ironed out and Commissioners are working with customers as well as installers to ensure a smooth process. There has been outreach both through

MIlive articles as well as through a kickoff event. There was discussion amongst Commissioners about continued promotion through hosted meetings and the possibility for sub partners to help organize additional group buy discounts.

Sustainable Funding

PUBLIC INPUT

Bill Kid asked about energy storage and how the city was going to handle it regarding assessment. He also asked whether the solar tax would take into consideration the depreciation of the panels.

Carlene Colvin-Garcia asked about a solar on schools. The Ann Arbor public school system is looking at a sinking fund millage in May to repair buildings, she wanted to know if there was a way to take advantage of the tax credit even though public schools cannot take advantage of them. Chair Appleyard explained that there was the possibility through private investors. He noted that schools pay a lower rate of electricity but turning to solar still could hedge against inflationary costs for electricity. The program could be part of the community solar program.

An Ann Arbor renter who is concerned about the lack of energy efficiency in his rental units was wondering if there was any program that attempted to deal with the landlord/renter split incentive in the City. Staff and the Commissioners covered some programs that Ann Arbor had recently undertaken and there was agreement to further explore and work on the topic.

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Commissioner Mirsky to present on possible adjustments to the City's renewable goals given recent change in the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS).

Commissioners showed interest in looking for people to work on energy related projects/interests outside of the Commission or as subcommittee efforts and how to support them. Mirsky agreed to head up further thinking and discussion at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Appleyard adjourned the meeting at 8:20 PM.

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**City Clerk's Office
301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104**

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or
www.a2gov.org/energy to learn more about the City's Energy Programs**

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www.a2gov.org/ctn**