

**CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE**

**CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

July 11, 2017

MEETING CONVENED: 7:00 p.m. Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ajay Prasad (presiding), Kismet Hazelwood, John Hornor, Bob McDowell, Kass Sheedy, Sheila Smith, John Wessells

ABSENT: George Irvine, Jason Kramer

STAFF: Sarah Campanelli, Secretary

Mr. Prasad called the meeting to order.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD ON JUNE 13, 2017

MOTION THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 13, 2017 MEETING BE APPROVED AS RECEIVED.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

3. GREEN ENERGY FUND/ ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM UPDATES

Mr. Prasad shared that he had been at the City Council meeting on July 10, 2017 to present the Green Energy recommendation. Mr. Prasad said that Council had a vigorous question and answer session and that Scott Lynch from DEMEC was present and able to assist in answering technical questions. Council members had asked why DEMEC was getting involved, to which Mr. Lynch explained that City staff had approached him for help. Mr. Prasad noted that Councilman Markham had asked whether CAC had just forwarded DEMEC's suggestions or whether CAC truly believed that the recommendations. Mr. Prasad had assured them that CAC had voted unanimously on these recommendations. Mr. Prasad stated that the main question was how many people were taking advantage of the Green Energy Fund. Mr. Lynch had answered that only a handful of residents were using this program and there were only 1 or 2 applicants in the pipeline. Mr. Lynch had also pointed out that many residents had installed Solar City panels which are leased systems. Mr. Prasad stated Council had concern that if people were not applying when the incentive levels were high, it was unlikely they would apply if the levels were lowered. Mr. Prasad had informed Council that DEMEC had suggested doing away with Trifurcation 1 but that CAC felt that was too drastic. He had noted that lowering the level was a reasonable move in light of the fact that PV costs had come down. Mr. Prasad stated that Councilman Hamilton and Councilwoman Wallace had been in favor of raising the incentive level back to the original \$7500. Mr. Lynch had explained that tying the incentive to wattage rather than 1/3 prevented people from padding the installation cost to maximize the incentive. He stated there had been some questions about why

fuel cells or wind were incentivized at 1/3 rather than wattage. He had stated that no one had ever applied for either. Council had expressed that the lack of interest was due to poor advertisement. Mr. Prasad advised that in the end, Councilman Markham had made a motion to send the recommendation back to the CAC to raise the incentive up again and tie it to the wattage. This passed 6 to 1, with the only “no” vote being Councilman Chapman.

Mr. Prasad noted that he had spoken to Mr. Lynch and Shannon Maner after the meeting who both felt that Council’s suggestions was not workable. They explained that if the City increases the NTE cap and ties it to wattage, it would end up with systems that were enormous in size. Mr. Prasad said that there were some options moving forward and went through the 3 options of different incentives and cut-offs. Mr. Lynch had suggested doing away with Trifurcation 1 and only funding Trifurcations 2 and 3 but Council was not in favor of that. Mr. Prasad suggested keeping Trifurcation 1 but, if there were no applicants in a predetermined amount of time, the money would be folded into Trifurcations 2 and 3. Mr. Hornor asked whether there were any applicants waiting for Trifurcation 1. Mr. Prasad stated that only 1 or 2 people had applied in the past year and that he had last heard there was about \$40,000 in the fund. Mr. Hornor noted that he did not think there was a lack of interest but that people were choosing to lease systems instead of buy. Ms. Sheedy pointed out that Solar City’s advertising and promoting was aggressive. She felt that the City was much less aggressive in promoting the incentive program. Ms. Sheedy suggested adding information about the program to the booth on Community Day. Mr. Lynch had previously suggested putting an information slip in customers’ electric bills. Ms. Sheedy liked the idea of keeping Trifurcation 1 and putting a cap of a year to see if it is used. She also suggested having a public information program during that year. Ms. Smith asked whether Trifurcations 2 and 3 were popular. Mr. Prasad explained that Trifurcation 2 was for public projects and Trifurcation 3 was for the City. He stated that even if it was not being used at the moment, there was potential for it to be used.

Mr. McDowell asked why the Trifurcations cannot remain the same. Mr. Prasad explained again why the incentive needed to be tied to the wattage rather than the installation costs. Mr. Prasad noted that Mr. Irvine seemed to be in agreement with keeping the higher-level incentive. Mr. McDowell noted that the City is basically in competition with Solar City. He agreed with looking into this issue again in a year and seeing how many people had used it. All members agreed that more advertisement should be looked into and discussed the possibility of asking the Electric Department for assistance. After some discussion, it was decided to have an incentive of \$1 per watt with a cut-off of \$5000, then 50 cents per watt with a maximum cut-off of \$7500 for a 10-kilowatt system. A new recommendation was drafted at the table and submitted to the record.

MOTION BY MR. WESSELLS, SECONDED BY MR. MCDOWELL TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATION AS AMENDED.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. GREEN ENERGY DASHBOARD PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Prasad asked Mr. Filasky whether there were any updates on a Green Energy Dashboard intern. Mr. Filasky advised that he thought it was very possible to get an intern for fall. He noted that it would depend on manpower as the Public Works and Water Resources was short-handed with their director Tom Coleman acting as City Manager. Mr. Prasad asked whether the person had been approved. Mr. Filasky answered that the funding was approved and that Mr. Irvine would send a list of candidates for the City to interview and have start in September. Mr. Filasky pointed out that Electric may be able to help onboard the individual and that once he or she is onboarded, they should be capable of working independently.

5. REVIEW OF PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

There were no comments.

6. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Smith stated that she had a Better Newark Award nomination. Ms. Smith said that the applicant had solar panels, a water permeable driveway and varied plantings including native and non-native plants, shade trees, color coordination, etc. Ms. Smith advised that the owners of the home, at 401 Orchard Road, were Catriona and Stewart Binder-McLeod. Ms. Smith was not sure whether the solar panels were owned or leased. There was some discussion as to the steps necessary to getting a BNA award completed. Ms. Smith noted that she had been told that if a nominee did not come to the Council meeting to receive their award, they could not get it. Mr. Filasky suggested that the CAC speak to the City's communications team about getting pictures displayed in the lobby and the Newark Post again as had been done in the past. Ms. Smith advised she would follow up about the process with Ms. Schiano. Mr. Wessells also suggested that someone contact Mayor Sierer to see if she was interested in presenting the BNA awards.

MOTION BY MR. WESSELLS, SECONDED BY MR. MCDOWELL TO ACCEPT THE BETTER NEWARK AWARD NOMINEE AS PRESENTED.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ms. Sheedy shared that she had spoken with Councilman Markham who had expressed an interest in seeing a car charging station installed in Newark. Mr. Hornor asked how this would work and whether it would be free for anyone with an electric car to come charge it there. Mr. Prasad answered that it worked that way in other cities. Mr. McDowell pointed out that some towns have preferential parking for electric vehicles. Mr. Hornor felt that the CAC needed to do more research on the cost and how these systems work before recommending it to Council. Mr. Prasad thought that the charger would cost about \$1000 but there could be additional cost in wiring. Ms. Sheedy asked Mr. Prasad if he could ask the University how much their chargers had cost. Mr. Prasad answered that he would ask. Mr. Filasky advised that the head mechanic would love to get some electric vehicles into the city's fleet and that he recommended a charging station for City Hall based on a Volvo emissions settlement. Mr. McDowell asked whether the City had any electric vehicles now. Mr. Filasky answered that the City has many hybrid electric vehicles but no plug-ins. Mr. McDowell pointed out this information would be good to put on the dashboard. Mr. Filasky shared that he had seen all electric pickup trucks that were made for municipal work but were only sold in large amounts. Mr. McDowell suggested that Newark could team up with other municipalities or the state to buy the large amount but split them up.

Mr. McDowell said that he had looked for tree donors for Community Day but had not found anyone. Mr. Wessells shared some ideas for Community Day. Ms. Smith advised she had spoken to Carolyn from Electric who had stated that they should still have the LED light display. Mr. Wessells described the water display put on by the Delaware Nature Center. Mr. Prasad suggested a separate display for the Green Energy facts. Ms. Smith felt that they may need 2 booths for all the displays planned. Mr. Wessells clarified that DEMEC should have their own display. There was some discussion on where to obtain the reusable shopping bags to hand out. Mr. Wessells showed the board the recycled bottle pens and stated he would find out the cost of the pens. Mr. Wessells also discussed some options for shirts for CAC members. It was decided that members would consider logos and submit some ideas. Mr. Wessells stated he had updated the letter introducing the

CAC to vendors. Mr. Prasad suggested mentioning Community Day earlier in the letter drafted by Mr. Wessells.

Mr. Filasky updated CAC that the Rodney parcel project was ongoing and that the Public Works and Water Resources Departments wanted to give a presentation to the CAC to give them more information about this project. Mr. Filasky stated that he would like to get on the agenda for September for he and a consultant to keep CAC updated. Mr. Filasky said that once the presentation was completed, he would like to request a recommendation from the CAC to Council regarding the Rodney parcel. Mr. Filasky also informed the board that there would be an information session for the public on July 25, 2017.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting is September 12, 2017.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Tara Schiano
Deputy City Secretary

TAS/sjc