Medford Energy & Environment Committee (MEEC) Agenda
August 31, 2020 @ 6:30 PM
Via Zoom Virtual Meeting Connection (connection information below)

Office of Energy and Environment: Alicia Hunt
Committee Members: Luke McKneally (co-chair), Bob Paine (co-chair), Barry Ingber, Lauretta James, Kathleen McKenna, Nicole Morell, John Rogers, Dave Hampton, Martha Ondras, and Jessica Parks

Attendance: Bob Paine, Luke McKneally, Lauretta James, Barry Ingber, John Rogers, Martha Ondras, Kathleen McKenna
Staff: Alicia Hunt, Ali Hiple, Karishma Aurora
Guests: Zack Gordon, Medford resident; Sam Glaser, student and president of Tufts Energy Group

1. Administration 6:30-6:50

- Greetings, roll call, and introductory remarks (6:37 pm)
  - Bob Paine called the meeting to order at 6:37 pm and read the Governor's open meeting law suspension order regarding the use of Zoom.
  - Alicia noted that the meeting is live on cable TV.
  - Guests:
    - Zack Gordon: Medford resident, works as R&D chemist working for DSM (global company), his work is currently focused on making green polymers

- Review of minutes from July 13, 2020 meeting
  - Motion by Lauretta James, seconded by Martha Ondras, the minutes were unanimously approved

- Administrative updates and dealing with the coronavirus issues
  - Admin updates (6:41 pm)
    - Energy & Environment/Community Development interns are switching to 20 hrs/wk or less with the start of school.
    - Miranda Briseno will be staying on as a full-time employee.
    - Visitors to City Hall still need to make appointments.
    - There has been some trouble with the email list, it is currently on a private server (it has been since start of Committee). Alicia recommended that if emails are showing up as spam, to enter the MEEC email address into your address book. Alicia also raised question of switching to a Google group

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2. Status of Harvest Your Energy Educational Event – October 17, 2020 and Ideas
   For Green Awards
   
   - Harvest Your Energy Festival (\textbf{6:47 pm})
     
     - Timing: Oct 17th, 12-3 pm
     - There is no public Medford outreach currently, though there will eventually be a small public press release. HYE will be introduced as an educational event in the style of the farmers’ market. There will be no food, no Green Awards, no music, to discourage lingering.
     - Ellie Hunt has emailed commercial entities that aren't specifically Medford-based
       - HomeWorks has responded yes
       - Some have declined to participate as they aren't doing in-person events (RevoluSun, Best Bees)
       - Alicia and Ellie have created a Google Spreadsheet for vendors
       - Ellie hasn't reached out to Lauretta's contacts or previous raffle-only vendors/products (no raffle this year)
     - Once the PR approach has been defined in terms of how the event will be handled, more thorough outreach will start. Go Green Medford Website has been updated with HYE info.
   
   - Ellie Hunt (Alicia's daughter) is primary point person for HYE, will connect with Lauretta
   
   - Bob: How does Alicia envision the HYE happening and how can the E&E Committee help out?
     - The Farmer's Market will be the model (vendors spaced far apart, no food eaten on site, enough space for lines to form safely, no music)
     - Committee members and other staff may assist at the festival with spacing, management of proper social distancing guidelines, etc.
   
   - Other:
     - There have been a lot of requests for a shredding truck at the event. Ellie is looking for one (the one used previously isn't available on the day of the festival)
     - There will not be electronics recycling
   
   - Luke raised concerns about being able to adequately manage crowds/number of people

   - Green Awards (\textbf{7:00 pm})
     
     - Question of how should the Green Awards be handled this year, if they are held
       - Luke: don't do awards this year, consider for future years
       - Bob noted that it's been increasingly challenging to find nominees/recipients in recent years anyway
       - John noted that many people are using this time to make capital improvements to their property (adding solar panels, etc.) so it's possible that there may be good opportunities for awardees in the future (Lauretta and Martha in agreement)
     - Alicia: the Mayor suggested a Zoom award but that she thought an in-person ceremony couldn't happen
       - Also noted that most key green people likely have already received an award or been recognized, possibly need to rethink/reframe this
       - Don't necessarily need to settle the issue for good at this meeting; the awards could be given on Earth Day, in the future, etc.
     - John raised idea of keeping Green Awards publicly on a wall in the new net-zero library
       - Library supposed to be completed approx Oct. 2021

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Motion by Martha Ondras, seconded by Luke, the Committee unanimously voted to defer the Green Award ceremony for 2020 and to reconsider it for next year.


- This was a continuation of the presentation given last meeting
- Recap of marketing issues discussed at last meeting
  - RECs (Renewable Energy Credits) - Barry calls these a “necessary bookkeeping device” to guarantee that a certain portion of energy consumption is green
    - However, they are very confusing and this has created potential threats for scams to consumers, and buying from private sellers often ends up costing consumers more
    - August 2020, MA Attorney General Maura Healey called for selling to consumers directly
    - There are often technical and distribution challenges from private sellers also, they don’t necessarily have the expertise/understanding for this
  - Equity concerns:
    - Access, or lack of access, for low- and moderate income people to add rooftop solar
      - instead of subsidizing rooftop solar, just should give subsidies to everyone in the community to help pay for their energy
  - Allocation of costs can produce social externalities:
    - Tax benefits are one incentive, these pose challenges for low-income people
    - RECs are also an incentive, these are susceptible to deceptive practices
    - Net energy metering also poses equity issues
      - Net energy metering “runs your bill backwards” for surplus renewable energy that users generate, and gives user credit back for this energy
      - This means people taking part in net metering are using the grid without paying for it, this has an impact on surrounding users who don't have solar
      - These programs favor the affluent; higher-income people are the ones who mostly use them, it’s an “income transfer” since subsidies are being paid by all for the benefit of those who use them, who tend to be wealthier.
    - Showed slides on the screen demonstrating that wealthy people have more rooftop solar - 82% of solar use is above median income nationwide
      - Additionally, higher-income people typically consume more energy (have larger houses, etc.), and getting cheaper energy doesn’t help incentivize efficient use
  - Commercial and industrial rooftop solar, and utility scale solar, are far cheaper to implement than residential rooftop
  - Privatization: Barry views the current approach to solar/renewables as analogous to what happened with public transit in the face of cars - doesn't think solar should go down the route of privatization
  - Barry makes the following recommendations for individuals who want to pursue solar in the best way (environmentally, socially, for individual needs):
    - Leasing of rooftop solar panels is particularly susceptible to scams so buying is the better way to go. Consumers can get an individualized professional assessment of your situation. You can do this through the Green Energy Consumers Alliance (a non-profit)
    - Municipal Aggregation, opt in up to 100% - Barry identifies as the best current

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option in terms of being the greenest, most cost-effective, and most equitable approach

- Community solar: a good early example is in Harvard, MA
  - Different models:
    - Utility model which is run by the public utility and in which the utility constituents are off-takers (this is rare)
    - Community solar can also be for profit or not-for-profit: not-for-profits are generally done through donations (these are also pretty rare), and for-profits are typically looking for consumers who will pay upfront or who can commit to paying, this is often based on a credit system which is similar to net-metering and therefore has related challenges. Also requires a large client to own 50% of the array for credit/payment purposes

4. Subcommittee Reports 8:00-8:20

- Tree and Urban Canopy Management (Lauretta, Luke, and Martha) - 7:11 pm
  - Lauretta noted that the Tree Report has been distributed, and is put up on the Go Green Medford website. The report was also emailed to the City Council. There have not yet been many responses yet as many are out on vacation. There are still a few more groups to distribute to.
  - Lauretta also thanked the report contributors and City Staff Aggie Tuden and Timothy McGivern
- Drought:
  - Massachusetts is currently experiencing a Level 2 drought. Lauretta has asked Aggie Tuden, Medford’s Tree Warden, if people could go out and water trees. Aggie said yes, and Lauretta encourages people to water sidewalk trees (especially young trees), need 14 gallons of water. Older trees need a long soak watering once a week, Lauretta suggested looking online to learn how to do this.
  - Trees Medford is working on a watering plan, people can also get in touch with them
  - Lauretta will connect with Aggie to clarify language about drought info that can be posted on social media (City’s Facebook and Go Green Medford Facebook)
  - droughtmonitor.UNL.edu is a good resource

- Bob: wants the tree group to possibly participate in energy forum in the fall (that he is planning to put together)

- Energy Educational Forums (Lauretta, Kathleen, Bob, and Jessica) - 8:10 pm
  - Sam Glaser, President (sophomore) of Tufts Energy Group joined the meeting
    - Tufts Energy Group is a student collective that seeks to educate the Tufts community on energy issues (forums, networking, etc.)
    - The Tufts Energy Conference typically takes place in the second semester, so unclear yet what this will look like for 2021
    - The idea is that this would be a Zoom event, with presentations of approx. ½ hour on various topics including possibly: solar, tree canopy, transportation, etc. (MEEC subcommittee topics, what individuals can do to get involved)
    - Timeframe: some weeknight before Thanksgiving (Nov 18th as a placeholder for now)

- Building Energy Management (Dave, Lauretta, Kathleen, Luke, Jessica, and Martha)

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3. mộ news
   ○ Passive House mentioned as a potential topic for the proposed Energy forum
     ■ What is a passive house, incentives for residents, etc.
   ● Transportation Management (Barry, Bob, and Martha)
     ○ Possible topics for Forum could be environmental justice and air pollution
     ○ Tufts professors who might be possible presenters: CAFEH Group (Community Assessment of Freeway Exposure and Health), Nilakshi Hudda, John Durant, Mark Chase, Shan Jiang
   ● Barry will send out list for planning the forum, prepared by Jessica Parks

5. New Business 8:20
   ● None

6. Adjourn 8:30
   ● Motioned by Martha Ondras, second by Luke McKneally, adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Community Development is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.
Time: August 31, 2020 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Join Zoom Meeting
https://zoom.us/j/92420707542
Meeting ID: 924 2070 7542
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Find your local number: https://zoom.us/u/abLBxJgqlD
Anyone wishing to send comments or questions to the meeting can send email to enviro@medford-ma.gov

The meeting recording will be available on the committee website within a few days:
https://medfordenergy.org/gogreen/medford-energy-committee/

Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the City of Medford Energy & Environment Committee is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but
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every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. A reminder that persons who would like to listen or view this meeting while in progress may do so by accessing the link that was included on the meeting agenda posted on the City of Medford website. If, despite our best efforts, we are not able to provide for real-time access, and we will post a record of this meeting on the city/town’s website as soon as we are able.

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Medford Energy and Environment Committee Members

Luke McKneally (co-chair): registered architect with in-depth experience in energy-efficient, environmentally responsive design and the use of renewable energy in buildings. He is a green building project manager at New Ecology, Inc., a sustainable development non-profit organization.

Bob Paine (co-chair): Certified Consulting Meteorologist and Qualified Environmental Professional. Experience in meteorology and air pollution studies and consulting. Associate Vice President at AECOM, a company that focuses on areas of air quality consulting, engineering, and compliance, climate adaptation, and PFAS mitigation.

Barry Ingber: has spent most of the past four decades with non-profit organizations that serve low-income communities and work for a more sustainable and affordable energy future. Most recently, he managed energy programs for Tri-City Community Action Program. Previously, as Executive Director of MassEnergy, he founded the state's first and largest green power program, and the nation's first non-profit renewable energy coop.

Lauretta James: has experience in business management, sales, event organizing and art & design. Previously, she was president of the MA Elevator Safety Association, on the Board of Directors of Mobius artist group and owner of a service business. She has worked with the MA Dept. of Public Safety and other groups to promote their causes. She has Professional Florist Training from Cass Florist School and is a MA Real Estate Agent.

Kathleen McKenna: environmental engineer at Commercial Construction Consulting, Inc. (C3), which deals with LEED and sustainability consulting, energy audits, and implementation. She is secretary of the New England Chapter of The Association of Energy Engineers. Kathleen served in the role of community solar coach for the very successful 2013 Solarize Mass Program, when she coordinated the community outreach process, answered questions from residents and businesses, and was the main point of contact for community members.

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Nicole Morell: currently a member of the Medford City Council. She is a social media manager at MIT. Her work often touches on environmental and energy issues as she works to share news and tech developments and stay abreast of the newest advances in these areas. She has volunteered for many campaigns for progressive candidates and issues and joined the committee to help advance Medford’s green future and protect its many green spaces.

John Rogers: extensive background in energy conversion (motors, batteries, chargers, power grid, electric vehicles). With Solectria, he worked on the electrical system for the “Solectria Sunrise” EV and on their Grid Tied Solar Inverters. With Azure Dynamics, he worked on a Ford E250 Electric Van Prototype and on the onboard charging system for Ford’s Transit Connect Electric. He now works for Instrumentation Laboratory - Bedford, MA.

Dave Hampton: Climate Resilience Associate at The Cadmus Group, practicing at the intersection of climate adaptation, international development, and resiliency planning with 20+ years’ experience in architecture, planning, and construction. His experience includes post-disaster recovery, sustainable development, humanitarian design, living systems integration, high-performance energy-efficient buildings, and materials reuse. His work brings people, nature, and the built environment together to adapt to a changing climate.

Martha Ondras: Master’s candidate in environmental health at Tufts. She is also a research associate at the Health Effects Institute (HEI) in Boston, working on air quality research. HEI provides high quality, trusted science for cleaner air and better health. Prior to pursuing a second career in environmental health, she retired from the post of Director of Design at Harvard Business School.

Jessica Parks: has extensive experience to develop greenhouse gas reduction plans, implement energy efficiency projects, establish energy reporting protocols, and create opportunities for occupant engagement and education. She is currently a Senior Project Manager for Energy Efficiency projects at MIT, supporting campus GHG reduction efforts. She holds a B.A. from Bennington College in Ecology and Architecture, and a Master of Urban and Regional Planning with a focus on Sustainable Development from the University of Michigan.

Medford Energy and Environment Committee Municipal Staff

Alicia Hunt: Director of Energy & the Environment as well as the Environmental Agent for the City of Medford. Alicia started working with the city in 2010 as the Energy Efficiency Coordinator and has done a lot of energy efficiency work on the City’s buildings. She facilitated the City’s Green Communities designation and works to bring in energy and environment related grants and programs to the City of Medford. Alicia is a Medford resident who brings her green knowledge to other Medford organizations in her spare time.

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