

Meeting Minutes

York Maine Climate Action Committee

Date and Time

March 12, 2025, 6:00 pm

Location

Zoom virtual meeting.

Attendees

Members:

- Cornelius Murphy, Chair
- Roy Sieber, Secretary
- Garrett Bent (joined in progress)
- Wayne Boardman
- Kiki Tidwell

Town Staff

- Taylor Maguire, Environmental Planner

Public

- Susan Covino
- Carol Libby

Call to Order

Cornelius Murphy called the Climate Action Committee (CAC) to order at 6:01 pm. A quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes

The committee approved the February meeting minutes, as revised: 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention. Consideration of the January 2025 minutes was deferred until later in the meeting.

Agenda Items

Environmental Planner's Report

A draft RFP for the firehouse solar project is under review by town staff in the code enforcement, legal, planning, and town manager departments. Taylor Maguire hopes to have town staff input back by March 14. She will circulate a revised RFP with the CAC prior to the April 2 meeting and would like to reserve time on that meeting agenda for discussion.

Taylor recommended contacting the Conservation Commission for future discussion of wildfire projection planning.

Update on Solar Developer Presentations to Select Board

Cornelius Murphy provided an update on plans to have solar developers make presentations to the select board on different solar development approaches that might be of interest for the Witchtrot Road site:

- The Efficiency Maine municipal lease program is designed to support the remaining costs after an Efficiency Maine rebate. They do not usually support solar development projects. The contact at Efficiency Maine referred Cornelius to a commercial municipal lease offering from Androscoggin Bank.
- John Simko with Androscoggin Bank has agreed to make a presentation on their municipal lease approach at a special session of the Select Board on March 24.
- Robbie Raymond of Sunwealth has agreed to make a presentation on their community solar development approach on March 24.
- John Dunster of ReVision Energy is interested in making a presentation. However, he suggested waiting for at least one month as ReVision sorts through rapidly changing political developments related to solar energy deployment. Kiki Tidwell offered to reach out to both John and Phil Coupe at ReVision to see if they might be willing to do a top-level presentation at a meeting with the Select Board on April 14.

The CAC discussed uncertainty in the solar energy market right now because of political changes at the federal level, and potential changes in Net Energy Billing (NEB) being discussed at the Maine Legislature. The CAC will continue to monitor these developments and the possible impact on any planned solar energy projects.

Budget Committee Presentation

Cornelius is in contact with the budget committee but has not yet been able to secure a spot on that committee's agenda. He hopes to be able to present to them later in March.

School Department Facilities

The school department has hired a new facilities manager, Kirk Sole. Cornelius will invite Kirk to a future CAC meeting to engage with him on how the CAC can help support efforts to make York Schools more energy efficient.

Coordinating with the York Community Center Building Committee

The CAC thought the draft letter prepared by Roy Sieber provided a good list of elements the CAC would like the Community Center Building Committee to consider in their work. Roy indicated the letter captured key aspects of the Climate Action Plan and was consistent with Community Center Building Committee Charter. Roy welcomed further feedback from the CAC and offered to coordinate with the Community Center Building Committee once they start meeting. All felt that it is important to provide input early and encourage the Building Committee to consider sustainable site planning and life cycle energy cost accounting in their design decisions.

Chases Pond Dam

Cornelius will invite Don Neuman, Chief Engineer of the York Water District, to a future meeting to discuss management of the Chases Pond Reservoir and associated Dam.

Department of Public Works

Cornelius will invite the new Public Works Director, Tim Deperrio to a future meeting.

York Electric Energy Billing

Roy Sieber briefed the CAC on an analysis of York electric energy billing for the period of August 2023 to July 2024, based on August 2024 energy bills. Some top-level findings:

- The Police Station on Hannaford Drive has the highest electricity consumption. It would be beneficial to look further into that location's electricity use and billing.
- The solar installation on the York Beach Fire Station is very effective and covers almost all Fire Station annual consumption.
- We have data available to support the development of the York Fire Station solar project.
- We should obtain updated billing data for New Town Hall now that it is fully occupied.
- That status of billing from Constellation Energy remains unclear. Further investigation is needed.

Taylor Maquire will provide an updated set of current bills to Roy for further analysis.

January Minutes

CAC members provided edits, and the revised January Minutes were approved, 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

Climate Action Committee Charter

Wayne Boardman recommended asking to update the CAC Charter to change the membership from 7 members to 5 members and 2 alternate members. The CAC agreed to postpone consideration of this change to a future meeting to allow more time for discussion.

Public Comments

Carol Libby will be the acting liaison between York Ready for Climate Action (YRCA) and the CAC.

Susan Covino will introduce Roy Sieber to members of the former energy steering committee who worked on the new Town Hall project. Their insights might be helpful related to the Community Center project.

YRCA is hosting a Climate Action Fair at York High School on May 3. The CAC recommended that Carol invite the school superintendent, as he has expressed interest in this type of collaboration.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 pm.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for April 2, 2025, at 6:00 pm via Zoom.

Prepared by:

Roy Sieber, Secretary