

Meeting Minutes

York Maine Climate Action Committee

Date and Time

February 5, 2025, 6:00 pm

Location

Zoom virtual meeting.

Attendees

Members:

- Cornelius Murphy, Chair
- Roy Sieber, Secretary
- Garrett Bent
- Wayne Boardman
- Kiki Tidwell

Town Staff

- Taylor Maguire, Environmental Planner
- Peter Joseph, Town Manager

Public

- Marina Mails
- Susan Covino

Call to Order

Cornelius Murphy called the Climate Action Committee (CAC) to order at 6:06 pm. A quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes

The committee unanimously approved the November 2024 meeting minutes, as amended. January 2025 minutes are being prepared and not yet available for review.

Agenda Items

Environmental Planner's Report

Taylor Maquire advised the CAC that email correspondence related to committee business is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), whether on town provided or personal email

accounts. Taylor offered help any committee members activate their town email accounts if they have not already done so. She will follow up by sending out step-by-step instructions.

Cornelius recommended that the committee use a common storage location for CAC files and work products. He will work with Taylor to set up a OneDrive location on the town file server and share the location with the committee.

Household Equity Fund Collaboration

Marina Mails, Executive Director of York Ready for Climate Action (YRCA) provided an update on the status of a potential collaborative effort to support a Household Equity Fund that could be used by low-income families pursuing home energy efficiency upgrades under existing Efficiency Maine programs. Currently, Efficiency Maine provides 80 percent of the needed funding but another source of funding for the remaining 20 percent of project costs is needed to move the projects forward.

YRCA currently has \$3750 available for this effort and is seeking financial support from the CAC. Marina reviewed a draft protocol to award funding to prospective applicants on a first-come, first-served basis. The YRCA board of directors has approved the draft protocol.

Committee members offered comments on the draft protocol to clarify the scope of eligible projects. Marina will present the suggested changes to the YRCA board and finalize the protocol.

The committee raised questions about whether the timing of funds for a prospective project coming from multiple sources (Efficiency Maine, YRCA, Town of York) would pose a problem for contractors. Taylor clarified that town funds within the CAC budget should be able to be released to a project if the CAC has voted on and approved the project. Taylor will follow up with the town finance office to confirm this approach.

YRCA staff are still working to identify potential projects which could be considered for funding. Any project under consideration will be vetted for funding by Efficiency Maine.

Marina informed the CAC she will be leaving her role at YRCA in mid-March. YRCA hopes to have a replacement in place before Marina departs.

Follow-up to Solar Power Presentation to Select Board

Cornelius reviewed next steps regarding the solar power projects presented to the Select Board at the January 27 board meeting. The Select Board was receptive to both projects, with some requested follow-up:

Fire Station. There are two outstanding questions. 1) Cornelius will investigate whether the project would be eligible under the Maine Municipal Lease program. 2) Peter Joseph will follow up with the Select Board to see if the project could be funded as a direct capital expenditure this fiscal year, using an existing fund balance. Pending the resolution of these two questions, town planning staff will develop a request for proposal for the project.

Witchtrot Road Site. The Selectboard is receptive to an informational briefing on the three potential funding approaches. Peter suggested that we set aside up to 90 minutes for this topic,

with the briefing scheduled immediately prior to a regular Select Board meeting. Potential dates of upcoming meetings are February 24, March 10, and March 24. Cornelius will follow up with the prospective solar project developers to pin down an agreeable date(s).

After the Select Board briefing(s), the anticipated next steps would be for the Select Board to indicate a preferred funding strategy, and the town planning staff to develop a request for proposal aligned with that strategy to send to interested bidders.

Town Electric Energy Billing

The committee discussed the importance of understanding the town's current energy usage and utility bills to be able to quantify potential savings. Taylor indicated the contract relationship with Constellation Energy had expired and she will forward email correspondence regarding the Constellation Energy contract status to the committee.

Topics for Budget Committee

Funding of fire station solar project. While using the existing fund balance would be a Select Board decision, the Budget Committee should be aware of this.

There is significant Efficiency Maine grant money available for energy efficiency retrofits at Maine public schools. However, it is difficult to get any traction to pursue grant money because the school department appears to have no formal capital planning process or capital planning staff in place.

Other Business

Maine has adopted the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) into the state building code, which York follows. The new building code will be effective on April 7. There may be opportunities for the CAC to support educational outreach to local builders, coordinated through the Code Enforcement Office. Taylor will follow up with Harry Norton to discuss.

Cornelius will continue to build connections and look for opportunities to work with the York High School Eco Club. Members of the Eco Club will be attending the Youth Leadership Summit in Orono.

Wayne Boardmen called attention to two upcoming presentations as part of the Climate Change information series sponsored by the York Public Library, YRCA, and the York Land Trust:

- [Sea Level Rise, Local and Regional Impacts](#) on February 12.
- [Offshore Wind](#) on February 26.

Roy Sieber indicated that the York Community Center Committee has now been established, and he will coordinate input from the CAC to the Community Center Committee. Roy requested feedback from CAC members on a draft list of topics to bring to the attention Community Center Committee.

Garrett Bent raised a growing concern regarding forest fire risk management in view of increasing drought conditions and climate change. The CAC will discuss this topic in more depth at a future meeting. Taylor suggested the Conservation Commission would be a useful resource to bring to this discussion.

Public Comments

No public comments were received.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 5, 2025 at 6:00 pm via Zoom.

Prepared by:

Roy Sieber, Secretary