

Energy and Environment Subcommittee

November 12, 2021

10:00 – 11:00

Zoom

Attendees: Michael Frue, Jeremiah LeRoy, Parker Sloan, Lena Hanson, Maggie Ullman, Meg Jamison, Jessica Hughes, Jamie Ager

10:04 – Meeting called to order

No public has joined, no public comment

Introductions

Clean Energy Financing (PACE) /Solar RFP update

- Based on the assessment statuses, once a county opts in for the CPACE program the geographical area will need to be defined.
- Cannot issue debt for CPACE program.
- The NC Clean Energy Plan in 2019 identified C-PACE as a viable option to finance clean energy projects. In response, the NC DEQ assembled a PACE Work group to identify barriers and draft legislation to enable the program
- Private financing is not currently identified as a barrier
- There are business models for organizations to provide the model for CPACE financing.
- The opt in for the CPACE program was extended until July 1, 2025.
- The CPACE program is worth exploring but there are several barriers and it will be time consuming. It is valuable for this groups time is to explore alternative financing.
- Business owners aren't turning down solar due to the price of solar but rather the return on investment is not within a 2-5 year period but a 8-10 year period. For many businesses this is too long of a return.

Alternative Options to incentivize solar on commercial properties:

- Revolving Loan Fund and Loan Loss Reserves
- Update Economic Development policy to include renewable energy incentive
- Work with Chamber to identify commercial entities that might be interested in solar
- Explore incentives for new construction
- Partner with Blue Horizons on Commercial Solarize campaign/education & outreach

Some members expressed interest in meeting before the December meeting to discuss moving forward. To comply with open meeting laws if there are more than 3 members present it will need to be posted as a special meeting and comply with all meeting laws.

10:59 - Meeting Adjourned

Solar RFP

- CIP this year has 2 projects: library and firing range
- Partnering with Black Mountain, COA and UNCA to piggyback on our purchasing
- Partnering with the schools
- Have cash in the budget approved for our 2 projects so we are not asking for financing
- Brownie shared a potential resolution to say round one RFP was great but there are more opportunities with our public schools
- Sustainability is a department of one. When are we going to have a conversation of expanding those resources to help carry this load?
 - There is a plan to ask for a position in FY23 – should perhaps ask for 2 – there are benefits to contracting some of the work
 - General Services added a staff position to assist with the construction and maintenance phases of these projects
- There are a significant number of schools that heat with natural gas. Not aware of push for electrification of buildings. Need to create a strategy to get schools electrified. “Take measures to power schools with 100% renewable energy” Should be a separate action
- Motion to approve the resolution: Terri Wells, second – Maggie Ullman; motion passed unanimously on vote

Make PACE discussion an item on next meeting’s agenda

Reviewed the resolution discussed at last meeting around supporting EV policy

- Is asking the Commission to approve two resolutions too much?
- The Commission is aware of this current policy
- Motion to approve the resolution: Terri Wells, Second: Meg Jamison; motion passed on unanimous vote
- Next briefing meeting both resolutions will be discussed
- October 5th Commission Meeting agenda will offer Solar RFP for vote

Motion to adjourn: Maggie Ullman, second: Terri Wells

Next meeting agenda

- Finish Clean Energy Financing
- PACE discussion