Medway Energy and Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes – April 15, 2020

In attendance: Carey Bergeron, Larry Ellsworth, Kristen Rice, Jason Raposa, Stephanie Carlisle.

7:06 pm Carey called the meeting to start.

The MESC is meeting virtually via Microsoft Teams Meeting.

Carey thanked the group for joining as we navigate this time. We didn’t hold a meeting last month, because the meetings were only for voting or decision-making boards. We will use this format until the times change. Carey asked if the group could help the Town somehow with everything that’s going on. Asked for updates from members.

Larry spoke with Selectman Glenn Trindade earlier in the day regarding solid waste and recycling in Medway and the upcoming changes. Exelon would like to extend their hours of operation, which may help the Town pay for its trash and recycling program without having to raise fees. Larry explained the conditions in the recycling market are down and there is almost no market for recycled glass at this time. Some of the recycled material has so little value that its cheaper to dispose of them in the solid waste stream. Recyclers pass these costs to the Town. Larry said the Selectmen would like to partner with the MESC to undertake a community outreach and education initiative. The goal would be to advise residents about the upcoming changes.

Carey posed the question whether the MESC should support an initiative that says glass shouldn’t be in the recycle cart. She would like to see the contract with Lawrence Waste Services. Jason’s interpretation of the Selectman’s request is MESC is tasked with creative ways to discuss these changes. Outreach should discuss the economics of recycling and how to manage the market as it changes. He suggests using alternative strategies to recycle as well. He asked if there is a budget for MESC to help with the outreach.

Larry will engage with the BOS to help. Discuss the dimensions of this task: change in habits that people have had for over 40 years. It may be worth looking at the contract with LWS. Larry said it costs roughly $70/ton to take the recyclable material away, $30 to process it, so 1 ton of recyclable material costs roughly $100/ton to process. The market has a big impact financially and on decision making.

Carey cautioned to be careful before we agree to something we don’t agree with.

Kristen mentioned that other communities are starting to turn away from single stream recycling to go back to separated recycling. Asked if the Town has looked into this option. Stephanie explained that this option was discussed early on in the contract process, but the Town has invested a lot of money in the single stream recycling carts so they weren’t going to make this change at this time.

Jason mentioned that maybe the MESC could have been more proactive and engaged during the contract process. Essentially, we are left with a new economy and we need to ask ourselves A. do we believe in it? B. Do we think we could have an impact on behavior?

The resurgent of plastic bag use during this pandemic was mentioned.

Larry mentioned he read about Baystate Textiles that have bins at the schools to collect fabric. Maybe the MESC wants to promote that service.

Outreach may be a subcommittee on its own.

The group then began to talk about subcommittees and the goals of having them. The intent is to focus the MESC’s efforts by breaking into smaller subcommittees to explore different topics including: energy, recycling, outreach and engagement, and infrastructure. Each subcommittee will have a lead and one other member for support. During the month, the subcommittee will work on their self-assigned topic and can talk with the other subcommittee member. Then, at the monthly meeting, the subcommittee’s will update the committee at large.

The MESC worked out the preliminary subcommittees and topics. Carey suggested the document could be the outline for their 5-Year Plan.

Energy –Larry, Carey

Temperature Set Point Policy

Green Community Grant 10-year update report

EV Community Choice Aggregation

Climate Change planning

Recycling Reusing Reducing –Kristen, Jason

Composting

Textiles

Composting

Black Earth

Wheelabrator/ MRF tours

Green Infrastructure projects – Jason

Tree planting

Biodiversity

Native plantings

Pollinator species

Water infrastructure -

Drinking water

Stormwater

Sewer

Infrastructure- Larry

Water Infrastructure - drinking water, stormwater, sewer

EV infrastructure

Green infrastructure

Continuity of service

Energy infrastructure

Diverse systems - promote redundancy

Outreach/ Community Engagement –Kristen, Carey

Education

Public events Community Service events: Clean Sweep, Medway Pride Day, etc

Social media/ website

Messaging

Outreach to other boards, organizations, Liaison

Tim Rice- photo on the roof near solar panels?

Carey outlined the MESC’s next steps:

1. Members start working on their topics
2. May meeting to be held on May 20, 2020 as scheduled. It may be virtual again depending on the situation at the time.
3. Carey and Larry will talk with the Selectmen regarding the solid waste and recycling changes and how the MESC can assist the Town. They will report back to MESC in May.
4. At the next meeting, Carey would like to discuss the six month and twelve month goals for the subcommittees.

Meeting adjourned at 8:27pm.

Minutes taken by Stephanie Carlisle.