

**First Stakeholder Meeting on the 100 Percent Renewable Strategic Plan Outline**  
**Concord Energy and Environment Committee (CEEC)**  
**January 22, 2019**

*Please note that the notes are summaries of main ideas stated and not meant to be verbatim. Edits to your comments are welcome.*

**General comments on the outline**

**Tom Aspell (City Manager, City of Concord):** For the Atlanta plan, thousands of stakeholders were referenced in the strategic plan. For Concord's strategic planning process, will the planning group invite different stakeholders throughout the process, or will the number grow. Will this group be consistent?

**Zachary Jonas (CEEC):** Hope to be able to engage the same group over the course of the plan's development. So you would be invited to return for the next 2 meetings. That said, please let Zach know about others that should be included in the process.

**Jon Hopkins (Pastor, Concordia Lutheran Church):** Faith communities are not specifically mentioned in general and this might help. A lot of buildings in Concord are faith community buildings and might be specifically mentioned as a priority.

**Introduction (pp. 1-4)**

**Tom Aspell (City of Concord):** In general, throughout the plan, need to be clear on whether you are referring to city (community) or municipal government goals and actions.

**Melissa Birchard (Senior Attorney, Conservation Law Foundation, CLF):** Mention the importance of energy efficiency in introduction

**Mark Scura (Kent Street Coalition):** It is a good idea for the plan to emphasize the economic viability of moving to 100% renewable energy.

Melissa Birchard (CLF): Yes, mention both economic viability *and* benefits.

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** Question for the group. We were hoping to keep introduction short and sweet. Do people agree with that approach, or should the intro be longer with more detail?

**Group:** *General nodding to indicate that yes, introduction should be pretty short*

**Melissa Birchard (CLF):** Agree with the approach. It is possible to add additional points to introduction without many more words

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** Agreed

**Madeline Mineau (Executive Director, Clean Energy NH):** The fact that Concord is making an effort to move towards renewable energy sources is probably appealing to young people that are considering moving to the area. So, it would probably make sense to include a statement in the introduction about how the 100% renewable initiative supports the concept of Concord as a livable and attractive city for young people.

**Scott Maslansky (Director of Clean Energy Finance, Community Development Finance Authority):**

Need to emphasize the difference between energy efficiency and energy conservation. Energy conservation needs to be emphasized generally throughout the plan. Hinting at the question of whether we even need a streetlight vs. whether we should change to LED streetlights.

**Energy Efficiency (EE) (pp 5-8)**

**Robert Baker (Transportation Cyclist, Concord Public Transportation Subcommittee/TPAC):** I agree with Scott Maslansky about the non-use strategy (nega-watt). Don't use energy at all, and that is different from EE. This should be emphasized.

**Larry Hynes (Grappone Automobile):** p. 7. We should suggest a LEED standard rather than certification for new buildings. The Grappone building is LEED 'certified' but was very costly to get the certification.

**Tom Aspell (City of Concord):** Agrees with Larry. Cost is too high,

**Madeline Mineau (Clean Energy NH):** EE section is focused on electricity and thermal. Transportation section is focused on converting to EV's. There should be a focus as well on reducing our use of transportation.

**Rebecca McWilliams (Concord State Rep/Lewis Farm owner):** LEED accredited professional and agrees on everything said about cost. However, rather than LEED certification, zero net energy should be the standard.

**Steve Duprey (Business owner):** Also agrees. The cost of LEED certification for the Residence Inn was \$200,000, just for the certification. It would have been far more cost-effective to invest the money in more energy efficiency, such as zero net energy. Generally agrees with an energy efficiency target or standard for new buildings, just not to be hampered by the certification costs.

**Jenna Meyer (Student, Environment Club Representative, Concord High School):** p.6. There is a mention of including an energy chapter in the curriculum. How young would this start? Is that high school? Or younger? The high school has some energy education for freshmen and sophomores already.

**Henry Herndon (Director of Local Energy Solutions, Clean Energy NH):** Oyster River School District begins energy education at a younger age and doesn't see why we couldn't in Concord.

**Jenna Meyer:** Agrees, good to start energy education at a young age.

**Scott Maslansky (CDFA):** For green buildings, there is a consideration around building size. By building smaller, can achieve much more in terms of efficiency.

**John Hattan (SEA/SEIU Local 1984):** The downtown work has been great and preserves the historic nature of the community. It would be great to link the strategy to Concord's vision as a historical place. Also, Concord is geographically large. Need to get out to the other wards to build community-wide support. Need to get as much input from other areas of town to get their brand of input. Plan needs to be representative of all parts of Concord.

**Zachary Jonas (CEEC):** We had discussed doing public information sessions in every ward, but logistically it is tough. But, we are going to try to advertise as much as we can to seek input, and ask you to reach

out to your lists. We do want to get out there and get feedback to build community-wide support in all of the geographic and community centers of Concord.

**John Hattan (SE/SEIU Local 1984):** Also, if the communities feel that they are a part of it, it is good for the community as well. There is a positive feedback cycle.

**Henry Herndon (CEEC/Clean Energy NH) :** Agrees with John's point, well-taken. Doesn't happen if it's something that the city or energy committee wants to implement. It happens if the various communities that are interested want to work together and with the energy committee, utilities, city. Wonder if there a demand from different constituencies to learn about renewable energy? Where do you see your communities fitting into this?

**Melissa Birchard (CLF):** To add to this, would you feel empowered if you have a sectoral network to leverage better rates? For example, the Weatherize Campaign of Vital Communities in the upper Valley has helped to negotiate a bulk buy rate for solar panels. So for example, faith communities can negotiate a bulk rate for solar. Would there be interest in this?

**Jon Hopkins (Concordia Lutheran):** Overall, within the faith community, there is great interest in the environment. But on the practical side, faith communities are also contending with lower attendance, which limits their budgets to take on EE projects. Concordia Lutheran has tried to do some EE work in the church. Another issue though are historical district regulations that add to the cost. Mention of net metering ...

**Michael Leuchtenberger (Senior Minister, Unitarian Universalist Church of Concord):** The U-U Church put in solar panels on our property and tried to combine with others in the faith community, but that didn't work out. A lot of regulatory hoops that made it complicated. Net metering laws were not aligned with what we wanted to do.

**Melissa Birchard (CLF):** re: Advocating for state legislation. Regarding state legislative changes that need to be implemented to support Concord's efforts: Have you thought about how Concord be represented at the legislature?

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** CEEC has been moving forward on the assumption that members of the CEEC may get involved in the legislature, at least tracking and sometimes advocating on bills, either on behalf of the CEEC or as individuals. Whether someone advocates for the City at the legislature is up to the City Council and City administration. Asks Tom Aspell whether and when that could happen.

**Tom Aspell (City of Concord):** In order for the city to talk to the state government about a particular bill, the City Council will need to adopt policy. Then, the city administration would be able to communicate directly with the state government.

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** The CEEC already has been tracking bills that are relevant to our pursuit of the 100%RE goal.

Clean Energy NH produces a weekly legislative update on their website and by email. CLF, Clean Energy NH and League of Conservation Voters also provide monthly in-person update sessions.

### **Electricity (Part III, pp. 10-15)**

**John LaRiviere (Wheelabrator):** Is energy from waste included as a renewable energy source?

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** Energy from waste is not specifically excluded, though the spirit of the resolution is for solar, wind, geothermal, hydro, biomass and other forms of energy that may be similar. Can discuss further with Wheelabrator. The 100% RE Goal encompasses energy that we consume. The plan will not prevent the Wheelabrator plant from operating in Concord, and selling its power to other power purchasers.

**Rebecca McWilliams (State Rep, Lewis Farm):** p. 10. Regarding your statement of co-location of agriculture and pollinator habitats, what exactly are pollinator habitats?

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** Larger solar projects have incorporated fields of flowers into their design to attract and support birds and insects that are pollinators. Communities are looking for dual uses. Also, bees and some other pollinators are under stress and policymakers are looking for ways to mitigate the stresses.

**Rebecca McWilliams (Lewis Farm):** As a farm owner considering a solar project, pollinator considerations should be incentivized, but not required.

**Sandy Crystall (Temple Beth Jacob):** Agree. There are other co-location possibilities for solar projects, not just pollinators. Pollinators could be listed in the plan as an example of co-location.

**Tom Aspell (City of Concord):** How is “local” is defined when we refer to local energy? Is it just Concord? Is it central New Hampshire? New Hampshire? New England? If we limit our energy sources by geography, we might be committing ourselves to more expensive power.

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** There are several layers. ISO New England is the outer bound of where energy would come from because New England essentially operates as one electric grid. Our power supply in Concord now is generated in New England. Our thinking is that we will get the most benefit if we generate renewable energy within the City of Concord – we will not only get the energy but we will also get jobs, energy security, economic benefit (taxes and lease payments), etc. Therefore, we should try to generate as much of our energy within the City as we can. Energy that is generated near but not in Concord gives us some benefits (energy, energy security – proximity) but not other benefits (taxes and lease payments). Energy generated elsewhere in New England gives us the energy but not the rest of the benefits. We recognize that we can’t meet all of our energy needs from power generated within the borders of Concord – cities have greater energy needs than smaller towns. In particular, we are interested in purchasing power from offshore wind when that becomes available.

**Tom Aspell (City of Concord):** p.10. Under support renewable energy development and below that, phrase about state legislation. Strike ‘any’ in the term about state legislation. Because there is a lot of bad state legislation.

**Melissa Birchard (CLF):**

- Municipalities have more power than most private actors to get stuff done. For example, you can negotiate directly with utilities to request a pilot or program – and then bring it to the Public Utilities Commission (PuC). Can also coordinate with other cities to make proposals together. Regarding Time of Use rates (for example) – you can talk with PuC and utility, and/or CLF to help get it done. Emphasis on taking action to get things done before going to the state.

- Concern about consuming more electricity in the future. Hopefully we will be consuming less with energy efficiency measures or energy conservation. Look at Net zero building.
- As you think about consuming electricity, what is needed? Strategies can include Time of Use Rates, Energy Storage (batteries), Shifting load around.
- MicroGrids – What exactly are we trying to do? What kind of microgrid? What does it do for you? Cut emissions? Is it to reach a climate goal or reach energy independence? Make fire safety programs more resilient? Be specific about purpose to ensure the microgrid will meet the need.

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** The outline assumes that total electric consumption will be higher once this plan is implemented, even after EE measures are taken, because we will have added EVs and electric heat (electrification) to our electricity consumption. We wanted to conservatively acknowledge that we might have higher electricity consumption. But your point is a good one – we shouldn't underestimate what we can do to limit electricity consumption via EE.

**Bob Reale (Liberty Utilities):** Include building code. Also, thinks to meet energy needs for electric power and thermal energy, steam may be required. Would methane off of Bethlehem landfill be considered a transitional fuel? Liberty has recently contracted for this fuel.

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** Landfill gas is not mentioned in the resolution. We can discuss further with Liberty.

**Madeline Mineau (Clean Energy NH):** How much electrical energy does Concord use?

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** 2018 Unitil data states that Concord consumed about 390 million kWh of electricity from the electric grid. This includes residential, business, and municipal government use. 2010 time frame estimates are about the same, so it hasn't changed much in the last 8-10 years.

**Andrew Locke (Essex Hydro):** There is a need to educate the public with basic electric knowledge. Need to be able to educate about kWh vs. KW, etc. Also, what about the use of scorecards to note how we are doing?

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** That is a good point. We do want to engage and educate people. We are thinking of a few things to make the plan understandable to anyone who reads it. The plan will at least have boxes to provide explanations of energy concepts, as well as a glossary for definitions, for many of these things. And public sessions will aim to educate.

**Scott Maslansky (CDFA):** Regarding financing, there are a lot of existing programs (utility rebate, clean energy fund, business finance authority) for renewable development. The challenge is getting the demand. We need you to help us get money out the door and streamlining the process. Talk to Scott about financing.

**Dana Nute (Merrimack County Savings Bank):** Yes, and get the banks involved from the beginning.

**Zachary Jonas (CEEC):** We have done some outreach to banks and hope they will join us at the next meeting.

**Zachary Jonas (CEEC):** Yes, the last section focuses on this.

**Madeline Mineau (Clean Energy NH):** Municipal aggregation is appreciated for those in downtown Concord where solar is not necessarily an option. Obtaining renewable energy needs to be made easy.

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** Yes. We want to encourage self-generation, but we recognize that not everyone has the money to pay for a solar project and the space to site a solar project. Even if you count community solar projects as self-generation, it won't be enough. We will have to get the balance of our renewable power the grid.

### **Transportation (pp. 15-19)**

**Rebecca McWilliams (State Rep/Lewis Farm):** With respect to funding and content on p. 18. The plan notes the need to convert the city fleet to EV's. CAT buses were just upgraded to diesel. Rebecca is on TPAC and notes the need to have a mechanism to access funding to purchase new vehicles. Some of the city's savings need to be redirected to EV's.

**Jenna Meyer (Concord High School):** p. 18. Similar question about school buses. When you say "converting" the fleet, do you mean retrofitting existing school busses with renewable technology, or buying EV's?

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** In the long term, the cost of EV buses should come down and the buses will become more widely available as well. The city and school districts make their vehicle purchases on a rolling basis, so we can't expect anyone to switch over at one time. The city and school district should track the cost and availability of EV buses and when we hope that when it makes economic and practical sense, they will switch to purchasing EV vehicles to upgrade their fleet. We anticipate that some of the Volkswagen settlement money should help to offset the cost of charging infrastructure and/or vehicles in the early stages.

**Robert Baker (Transportation Cyclist, TPAC):** p. 15 and 19 states that this plan will focus on EVs and accept the recommendations of TPAC. However, public transportation/walkability/bikability/shared transport should be treated as part of the plan. The plan should consider the externalities of EV production (energy consumption, materials, storage as in parking garages). Choices to participate in the 100% renewable initiative should include not using a vehicle at all. We can encourage EV ride-shares, and car-shares with combustion engine vehicles are also great option in the interim. Bike share is also a great option to participate. Atlanta and other communities focus on this.

**p. 16. Total cost of ownership of vehicles.** Encourage you to use life cycle analysis instead. What does it cost to produce an electric vehicle? What about storage as in parking garages, including charging? There are costs outside Concord, as well as costs to municipal government. If there are choices and people can choose to not use to participate, then you may not need parking. In this case again, non-use is a better option. More of a sustainability issue.

**p. 19. Encourage EV ride share programs.** Why if you can do bike share instead, when there are safe facilities throughout the community. Any option to cut back is an important transportation issue.

**Scott Maslansky (CDFA):** Volkswagen money offers a great opportunity, but timing may not work well. Instead, the VW money might go to new diesel because timing may not work out on EV purchase. Volkswagen money needs to be looked at as soon as possible and earmarked for some of the EV needs

such as buses and plug-in stations. There isn't enough advocacy right now to say that electric is a way this will want it to be used (so advocate)!

**Sandy Crystall (Temple Beth Jacob):** On the aspect of reimaging and redesigning the city. Concord is going to move to form-based zoning. Need to encourage walking and biking as part of the zoning approach. (Also TPAC rep).

**Larry Hynes (Grappone Automobile):** Would be nice to see more focus on plug-in hybrids as a transitional vehicle. They offer a lot of benefits – you can run on electricity for about 20-30 miles before switching to gas. Takes care of a lot of local driving needs. Also, NH is not a ZEV state (zero emission vehicle state) so it is hard for dealers to get EVs onto the lots. Currently, Grappone has to make an arrangement with dealer in MA to bring an EV here. Can't get them directly from the auto company. NH should become a member of the zero emission mandate to get these cars more easily.

**Tom Aspell (City of Concord):** (p. 19). Suggests changing language to “*explore* extending property tax exemption...”

**Zachary Jonas (CEEC):** If there are additional comments, please write it down and give it to us.

**John Hattan:** Is there a deadline?

**Zachary Jonas (CEEC):** In March, about 10 days before our next meeting (which is on March 27).

*[The committee actually asks that people submit comments by mid-February to ensure they can be included in the initial draft.]*

### **Thermal Section (pp. 19-21)**

**Dana Nute (MCSB):** Mention thermal RECs

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** Explained that thermal RECs are part of New Hampshire's renewable energy portfolio (RPS) standard.

**Emily Barker (Student, Saint Paul's School):** Are woodstoves and pellet stoves part of biomass, even if they are not the cleanest source?

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** Biomass is included as renewable energy in the City Council-adopted resolution. Some people think biomass combustion shouldn't be relied upon in a renewable energy transition because burning wood generates air pollution. On the other hand, there may be avoided methane emissions from decomposing wood in the forest. There is also a practical or political consideration – logging and biomass is a significant portion of New Hampshire's economy. People use wood stoves. It is locally produced/harvested. We don't want to tell people they can't use wood.

**Melissa Birchard (CLF):** May want to considering including heat pumps in renewable portfolio standard. Right now biomass is included.

**John Hattan (SEA/SEIU Local 1984):** p. 19. Missing the word will. “Agrees that progress *will* be slower on thermal.”

**Melissa Birchard (CLF):**

- Talk with utility about special rates if there are certain peak and low times of use anticipated. This applies to both the transportation and thermal sections.

**John Hattan (SEA/SEIU Local 1984):** Acronym reference would be helpful.

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** We've been considering boxes to help explain things and a glossary. Open to suggestions about how to make this as understandable as possible.

**Madeline Mineau (Clean Energy NH):** It is important to educate the public and help homeowners, businesses to develop a long-term strategy on what to replace with if their heating system fails.

**Melissa Birchard (CLF):** Same for hot water heater. Vital communities may be able to give advice. They have also negotiated bulk rates for more EE options. So, they have a stock of better options for when a boiler or hot water heater dies.

**Rebecca McWilliams (Lewis Farm/State Rep):** Mention geothermal as one thermal energy option. Makes a lot of sense in Concord, people just need to plan for it. Lawn locations that may be good for geothermal. Talk with planning about this.

#### **Reporting and Implementation (pp. 21-23)**

**Tom Aspell (City of Concord):** (p. 23) A little about the Master Planning process. The Master Plan is adopted by the planning board. There will be a census in 2020, and the new Master Plan will be written after that. So that will come in about 2022.

**Scott Maslansky (CDFA):** Regarding the Sustainability Staff person. The plan needs to be realistic about what a staffperson can get done and when. Need to prioritize.

**Chuck Willing (CEEC):** The outline is not always precise about who is responsible for implementation of an action. That will be worked out in the course of writing the plan as we decide what elements will go into the plan. We expect that the final plan will clearly identify who is responsible for particular recommended actions. Regarding hiring someone, that is ultimately the City's decision. However, many of these elements, particularly Municipal Aggregation, will require a professional to manage the program.

**Michael Leuchtenberger (Unitarian Universalist Church):** Will there be a way for individuals in the community to capture flights and other lifestyle decisions that contribute to carbon footprint outside of what occurs within the borders of Concord? This could be a way to give people credit for changing their lifestyle.

#### **General Feedback**

**Tom Aspell (City of Concord):** Offered a general comment for the CEEC. This process and plan is moving City government into new terrain. We will be encouraging in a strong way new things that City government has not typically asked of the community and private sector. The committee needs to be sensitive to this. Recognizing this can help to decide what to work on first. It would help if we could show some initial success to build support before rolling out an aggressive plan. That said, the committee done a great job so far...

**Steve Duprey (Business owner):** Reinforcing what Tom said. The Main Street project was preceded by 10 committee meetings and 23 public meetings, with over 1,000 people that showed up, and thousands of comments submitted. It was still controversial and people thought it wasn't debated enough. The RE goal is a great one. We just need to make sure that the 100% renewable energy plan gets out there into the community for feedback and also to inform the public about it.

**Melissa Birchard (CLF):** Throughout, there needs to be outreach and follow up with renter communities in addition to landlords (residential and commercial).

**Zachary Jonas (CEEC):** Please let us know if you think of additional people we should talk to.

**Jon Hopkins (Concordia Lutheran):** My business is aspirational, and we thank city councilors for being aspirational as well.

**Michael Leuchtenberger (Unitarian Universalist Church):** The CEEC and the 100%RE goal should have some visibility on Earth Day.

**Tom Aspell (City of Concord):** It would also be good for the CEEC to highlight the work of champions of renewable energy and energy efficiency in the town – recognize and praise their leadership. For example, the work by Larry (at Grappone) and Steve Duprey on green buildings. Highlighting successes like this could serve a valuable role in marketing, education, and giving people credit for their efforts...