

Mason Energy Commission June 1, 2020

Present for this virtual meeting: Pete McGinnity—BOS moderator for Zoom, Dick Stockdale, Curt Spacht, Kathy Chapman, Darrell Scott, Joseph Harney, John Gage—Guest from Citizen's Climate Change, Garth Fletcher, Liz Fletcher, Dave Morrison, Mike McGuire, Michele Siegmann, Doug Whitbeck, and Michelle Scott

Agenda: Approval of May minutes. Motion by Liz, 2nd by Michele Siegmann, and approved by roll call. Joe's approval for MEC was delayed, and will be before the Board of Selectmen (BOS) later this month. Meeting attendance schedule for BOS meetings is set up see end of minutes. Everyone was ok with the list as it is, as they may call for a substitute when things come up.

Police station electricity costs: Michele will check into this with Darrell's assistance and report back to MEC. Michelle Scott will attend the Conservation Commission to check on how trees might be helpful in carbon sequestering.

Community Power programs: We briefly discussed this issue which John Gage is also familiar with. Community Aggregate Power RSA 53-E is possible for even small towns like Mason and after attending the Friday June 4 workshop/info, Michelle and Joe will report back to MEC in July.

John Gage presented information on the Carbon Cash Back concept, and suggestions for a warrant article. The idea of carbon cash back is to (1) assess costs of carbon at their sources, and (2) rebate the assessed fees to consumers. If carbon costs are assessed, the producers will find ways to do business to reduce their costs. At the same time, the producers will raise the prices of their products to cover the costs, and consumers who purchase the products at the higher price will also receive rebates. In this way, businesses will be encouraged to reduce the sticker price to them for the production of carbon, and consumers will not see an increase in costs. Liz wonders about the location of where the carbon is assessed. Gas for example, leaks after leaving the site. John's response: When the Fossil fuel enters the economy is when the assessment happens.

Mike asks if this is carbon credit, or cap and trade, or like a solar rebate?

John: They are talking about carbon pricing, directly, which is different from cap and trade. Cap is the limit of pollution, and the trade can be bought later, and can be sold.

What is the REGGI price now after 10 years of working, the price is \$5/Ton. This compared to cash back would start at \$15/Ton, and would be over \$100/Ton in 10 years.

Carbon pricing is a marketing success in other countries where it has been tried.

John Gage: for more info to discuss carbon cashback, go to: <https://sites.google.com/view/carbon-cashback-coalition/> See <http://bit.ly/our-energy-future> for more resources to back up John's promotion of Carbon Cash Back. He recommends links of the website. Also attached to these notes is John's excellent explanation of carbon cashback he sent to MEC on 6/1.

Alternative energy virtual tour: Darrell has sent 2 virtual tour videos to MEC for review. We need advertising, a place to put them, and the future goal would be to link them together, and add info to link HAREI. Darrell wasn't successful yet in getting a roof mount system, or Bob Dillberger's geothermal set up. Darrell continues to update the videos, and plans to add one new site/month as is possible. Kathy suggests we send Bob Dillberger the videos, to encourage him to participate, which Darrell actually did recently. Advertising? FB pages, newspaper? Maybe we could suggest the videos be added to the energy savings new builder check list. Pete believes that the town email (Deb's list) reaches about 400 households.

Darrell's mini household survey: How do we get people's attention for reducing energy per household. People who participated were mostly MEC members, so the energy use may have been somewhat skewed. Gasoline is about 40% of costs, Electric vehicles could greatly reduce the costs to each person and if the town makes that investment, to the Town as well.

This household survey info was tabled for now, and Darrell will hang on to it. It turned out now to demonstrate what we expected!

Dave and Ms Hooper: Educating youth: Mrs. Hooper's fourth grade energy lesson is in the spring. Several suggestions came up. Use small solar panels to demonstrate what could be done with solar energy. Mad Scientist of Mason—Dave to dress up, Michele Siegmann to write age appropriate questions, and Joe may have something to add for the lesson plans.

Action Item: Education committee—not yet, we will bring ideas to MEC meeting to firm up some action items to get education for energy in the forefront of people/children's attention.

Master Plan. Doug, Liz, Michele, Kathy. They wanted to have it done this summer so people could review. Dane has been editing based on the survey that they did. Doug says they plan to put the master plan on the website, and it needs to be published by Nov or Dec. Kathy suggested that we go thru the whole document to include energy considerations in chapters. No one is enthusiastic about reading the whole Master Plan and making the inclusions. We will let it as is, except we will add the lighting part which is now a go! Many thanks to Kathy Chapman's dogged pursuit of this goal which has paid off in terms of MEC accomplishments, and the Town will save money!

We will wait and see after Dane has made edits to Master Plan. Liz will get the edited copy to pass on to sub committee meeting to review Energy section, maybe by the end of June?

Moving the town to 100% renewable. The 2 people from Keene and Peterborough will come to the next meeting about how they did it. Do we want to do that? And can we do that too? This would be a separate warrant article to set some goals, and only present this when we are very well prepared.

Michelle and Joe have signed up for the Virtual community Power Summit on Friday, June 4th 1-4pm. Meeting was moved to be adjourned by Michelle Scott, seconded by Liz, the meeting ended at 9:06 pm.

Addendum: John Gage CCL info page

There are several resources that help answer your question.

The first is the basic economic thinking around putting a price on carbon: <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/laser-talks/economic-effect-carbon-tax/>

The second can be found in the four reports listed on carboncashback.org/benefits/. This policy benefits most families, even after accounting for higher prices and higher municipal energy costs.

The cost increases that municipalities will pay (due to the carbon fee paid by fossil fuel producers trickling down to them) will mean they have to raise taxes to cover the difference, but this will not raise the effective tax rate of households because they are also receiving their dividend. The increase in taxes that households will see is included in the economic analyses that show most families come out ahead financially.

Higher municipal costs leading to higher municipal taxes are similar to the effect of businesses raising prices due to higher fossil fuel-based energy costs. This increase in fossil fuel prices will cause businesses and municipalities to prefer energy efficiency and lower-polluting options. Investments in clean energy solution and efficiency will reduce energy costs below where they are today over time - in thirty years energy costs will be less than they are today and emissions will be reduced by 90% from 2017 levels.

The temporarily higher prices of doing business and for municipalities are a reason the household dividend is such a critical component of the policy. By returning all the money collected to households, households will be able to afford the temporarily higher prices. A home with an average carbon footprint will continue to break even, because all the higher prices combined will equal the amount they receive in their monthly dividend. As businesses, municipalities, and households work to reduce their costs, they will all be working to reduce their pollution. The clean energy and efficiency options preferred by all of them will grow in number and decrease in price through economies of scale.

Since most families have a smaller than average carbon footprint (especially on the low end of the income scale), most families will come out ahead during this transition, even after paying the higher prices and higher municipal taxes.

The three big powers of the Energy Innovation act come from how the three components work together:

1) Rapid emissions reductions across the whole economy from an aggressive and steadily increasing price on those emissions, sending a strong price signal to investors, businesses, municipalities, and consumers to incentivize preferences for less-polluting options.

2) The dividend protects household budgets from temporarily higher prices and temporarily higher municipal costs during the transition to a clean energy economy.

3) The border adjustments push our carbon price around the world, making it a global emissions reduction solution. It is why this single policy has the potential to achieve the Paris 2°C warming target, and with land-use, agricultural practice, and similar policies to achieve the 1.5°C target. See the reduction targets in the Energy Innovation Act (HR763) in this graph (green circles):

<https://community.citizensclimate.org/resources/item/19/393>

I'm happy to discuss more or respond in email if that works better.