

JOINT MEETING
**Sustainability & Energy Commission (SES) / Community Energy Plan Steering
Committee (CEP)**

Minutes of the
Community Energy Plan Steering Committee ONLY – APPROVED on 9/5/24

August 8, 2024,

6:00pm

Grand Haven, Michigan 49417

Grand Haven City Hall Council Chambers

519 Washington Street

Meeting called to order: Chairperson of the CEP Garry Post called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Members Present: Ashley Latsch (Ex-Officio of both SES and CEP), Erik Booth (CEP), Pamela Blough (SES), Ryan Cotton (SES & CEP), Steve Nagen (CEP), James Hagen (SES), John Kinch (SES & CEP), Jean Madden (SES), Patti Nelson (SES & CEP), Dan Small (SES), Will Montgomery (CEP), Deanne Brink (CEP), Eric Law (SES)

CEP Members Absent: Nancy O’Neil, David Mann, Paul Cederquist, Karen Sherwood, Craig Bessinger, Jerry Sias, Mike Fritz, John Job, Nick Pietrangelo, Bill Cargo

CEP Consultants Present: John Kinch (CEP)

CEP Consultants Absent: David Gard, Brittany Goode, Michael Larson.

CEP Call to Audience: Community Energy Plan: None.

CEP Amendments or Changes to the Agenda: None.

CEP Approval of Agenda: Motion was made by Ryan Cotton and Craig Bessinger. The agenda was approved.

CEP Approval of June 11, 2024 Minutes: Motion was made by Steve Nagen to approve the minutes. Patti Nelsen seconded this motion. Ryan Cotton and Garry Post noted the one change included.

Community Energy Plan Steering Committee: Gary turned the floor over to Michigan Energy Options Consultant John Kinch for an update. John recognized the group of people present as the group in the community that is engaged in the plan and will help implement strategies, then he introduced his presentation, saying it contained foundational information.

John Kinch's Presentation: John shared the following information in his PowerPoint presentation. The Community Energy Plan optimizes local energy use through efficiency and renewable energy sources. The current stage of implementation of the CEP is between planning and integration and positioning for funding. A plan for an energy transition is a two-to-three-year lifespan at this point (meaning it will be outdated in two or three years). To emphasize the idea that energy innovation is happening quickly, John used the example of the original manufacturer in rooftop solar but now they're out of business.

Right now, the introductory parts of the CEP are written, yet the strategies are not finished yet. In the plan, it is important to look at what strategies we should be considering as a community, specifically in the BLP service territory, which is the main region of the CEP. To develop the CEP, there has been rigorous community input. The next step is coming in and implementing strategies.

Carbon footprint analysis is being used with a 2022 baseline. Grand Haven, Ferrysburg, and Grand Haven Township exists within the context of city, township, county, state, etc. i.e., these communities are nested within these other governing bodies. The MI Healthy Climate Plan will be helpful in pushing the CEP forward since this plan has to work within the context of the state.

The most important aspect of the CEP is projects. Analysis done by Five Lakes Energy has three pathways to decarbonization: good, better, best. With any of these goals, the area will not reach complete decarbonization by 2050 but that is OK because it is an ambitious goal, it is far better than what we were doing in 2012, and innovations that come up in the future may make it easier to achieve decarbonization. We need to consider carbon offsets and continue to revise as new technology emerges. The following strategies will be suggested as broad strategy buckets in the CEP:

- **Renewables**

- Our communities are set up well for renewable energy goals because there are projects that are already happening here
- The Board of Light and Power already sources 24% of fuel source from renewables
- Three more renewable projects will be coming online in 2025

- **Transportation**

- Electric Vehicle opportunities
 - Electric vehicle fleets (electrifying vehicles owned by GH)

- This can be a very predictable sector because we know how many vehicles, how often and far they travel, etc...
- To electrify fleets, we do not have to worry about chargers and infrastructure
- Some locations like the state park do not have infrastructure for DC Fast chargers so creating that infrastructure could be price barrier. But Level 2 chargers make more sense for parks anyway since people are usually staying for a prolonged period).
- Remember: Electric Vehicles are cars and there are more ideal solutions
 - Mass transport (Harbor Transit They are also electrifying their fleet)
 - Walkability/rideability
 - Note: In the chart presented, vehicles are divided into Light Trucks and Heavy Trucks

Other Discussion Items

How to make the CEP work

- Follow the data
- Community
- Leadership

Community Survey

- 400 people took the CEP survey
- It was found that respondents agree that climate change is real and there are local solutions (John noted that Michigan has not been hit as hard by climate change yet compared to the rest of the world, but soon heat will be a big issue locally)
- People are interested in locally based projects

Equity

Equity is very important in community energy planning, and this is reflected in the Inflation Reduction Act. The example used to illustrate this point is that people are having a hard time paying utility bills in the summer so it's important to be mindful of that when planning.

What sector is best to lead local energy programs?

All sectors working together.

Key strategies (two categories: enabling/capacity building and core strategies)

Core

- Support community energy engagement/education/equity; Address the efficiency of buildings and tie it to renewable energy, the BLP is making this easier to achieve.
- Adopt enabling policies to reduce emissions. Invest in local clean energy projects; it would be useful to have a grant writing team and people dedicated specifically to these goals.
- Track results and update plan regularly

Enabling

- Reduce emissions in buildings
- Accelerate local renewable energy; How can we utilize commercial roofs for solar? There is funding that is available or will be available, so it is important to start right away before the funding no longer exists.
- Transition to electric vehicles (EVs)
- Protect and restore land/water
- Promote food and waste sustainable systems and circular economy; Economic development strategies can be involved
- Develop local climate resiliency plan; this is about adapting. The Coast Guard and Army Corps of Engineers has a very good resiliency plan for themselves.

CEP Member Questions & Discussion:

Question: Patti Nelsen asked when the draft of the final plan will be done?

Answer: John did not have a timeline but mentioned sections that are already done including the carbon data sections, community input, and similar sections. The strategies based on experience and expertise, sectors and examples, and the community are nearly done but he is trying to nail down specifics. John asked if it would be better if he show the parts that are already done with the idea that it's not quite whole yet, or wait to show until it is completely done? In response to this question, Pamela Blough expressed concern that it will be hard for people to digest the whole thing at once, so it might be beneficial to use what is ready to get people ready for the full thing. Gary Post said he would like to have drafts completed a week in advance of the meetings so there is time for people to read the information before the meetings.

Question: Jean Madden asked John how he sees the CEP rolling out and asked about the idea of having someone working full time on the rollout of the plan.

Answer: John Kinch said it is important to have someone who is dedicated to the plan full time, because it is important to have the capacity and skills to work on projects like this. He touched on the idea that ideally this person would be shared among the various communities. Ryan Cotton brought up how one major way the CEP will give the community a return on investment is through a huge reduction in utility bills (strategy 1.1).

Question: Ryan Cotton asked if to help community members understand the personal benefits of the CEP, would it be helpful to put information in terms of per capita including charts covering dollars saved per capita?

Answer: John Kinch said the numbers per capita have been crunch and can be used. John agreed that the per capita numbers can be powerful especially because the goal of the CEP is to improve people's daily lives on a personal level. Ryan Cotton noted that the top three orange boxes in the chart on John's slide (reducing emissions, accelerating local and renewable energy, and transitioning to EVs) is related to original Request for Proposal that was approved for Michigan Energy Options, but the bottom three boxes including food waste and water are a lot broader and are not covered/required in the RFP. John Kinch agreed that they are broad but the strategies in the broader categories are not extensive and are meant to get people thinking about connections between the impacts of different facets of life.

Question: Gary Post mentioned there was discussion about having a Franklin Energy presentation suggested by the BLP (Franklin Energy is under contract to the BLP and this contract could be enlarged by the CEP communities)? Erik Booth said Franklin Energy is willing to do a presentation, looking at current programs and future plans. Gary asked if it was possible to have information and attachments about what the BLP is doing now and how best the CEP can supplement or augment it in an email and the BLP representative agreed that was a good plan.

In closing, Ryan Cotton emphasized the importance of making homes more efficient. He cited icicles on some community member's roofs indicating inefficiencies. His vision is to increase efficiency of homes to save people money and increase equity in the community.

Continued Discussion by the Sustainability and Energy Commission:

The SEC discussed Harbor Island, the Forest Management Task Force Update, and the Labor Day Beach Cleanup.

Next Steering Committee meeting: September 5th at 12:00pm

New Business / Other: It was announced that BLP Director interviews will be August 12th at the Central Park place in Woodbine Room. John Kinch was asked if he could present the survey results at the next BLP meeting on August 15th? John Kinch said he would be gone then.

Second Call to Audience: None.

Adjournment: Pamela Blough made a motion to adjourn the Joint Meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.