



**City of Middletown**  
**CLEAN ENERGY TASK FORCE**  
**MINUTES**  
**MEETING OF NOVEMBER 02, 2022**  
**VIA WEBEX**

**Members Present:** Anna Salo-Markowski (Chair), Demetrius D’Alessandro, Erin Dopfel, Christopher Holden (ex officio), Ray Lumpkin, Michael Marino, Sara Mendillo, Harold Weissberg (ex officio), Krishna Winston

**Members Absent:** Augie deFrance, John Giuliano, Patrick McKenna, Catherine Young

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 PM by Chair Salo-Markowski.

**2. Introductions**

The Chair welcomed Harold Weissberg, the newly appointed Deputy Director of Public Works, and invited him to introduce himself. Members of the Task Force then introduced themselves.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Marino moved approval of the minutes of the October 5 meeting, seconded by Ms. Mendillo. The minutes were approved without additions or corrections.

**4. Public Comment**

No members of the public were present.

**5. Old Business**

**A. Projects**

**Conversion of City’s small tools to electric models**

Mr. Holden reported that the survey of City workers drafted by Mr. D’Alessandro had been revised but not yet administered. He noted that conversion of heavier equipment would not yet be feasible. Mr. Weissberg commented that although he used electric tools at home, for City use certain gas-powered tools were indispensable. Chainsaws, vital especially after storms and in other emergency situations, could operate uninterruptedly for 150 hours, merely needing refueling, whereas electric saws would need to be recharged frequently and were far less powerful and durable. The Chair suggested that electric weed-whackers and lawnmowers could be satisfactory. Mr. Weissberg added that extra batteries could be kept on hand and that such machines did not have such heavy power requirements.

**Drafting a job description for energy coordinator**

Mr. Holden reported that he had met with the Chair and Ms. Winston to develop a framework for the position. The details would have to be adapted to the standard HR template, presented to the

Mayor, and then vetted according to City procedure, going first to the General Counsel Commission, then to the Finance and Government Operations Commission, and finally to the Common Council. He did not think a further CETF meeting was necessary, but the minimum professional qualifications remained to be identified. He thanked the Chair and Ms. Winston for researching, organizing, and analyzing relevant information on job postings and current positions.

### **Solarization campaign**

Mr. Holden commented that the developing energy crisis, with shortages of oil and natural gas predicted, lent urgency to developing opportunities to use more renewables. With large rate increases requested by the utilities and warnings of rolling blackouts in the coming winter, there was no time to waste. Ms. Mendillo reported that the Chamber of Commerce's subcommittee on the environment and infrastructure had met earlier in the day to discuss these problems, as well as local transportation needs, septic-system challenges, control of invasive vegetation, and the like. The meeting had had representation from the Lower Connecticut Council of Governments, and consultants had also attended.

Mr. Lumpkin commented that combining heat pumps with solar installations made sense, especially for electrically heated homes like those in his neighborhood. Ms. Mendillo remarked that she was aware of such combinations on Cape Cod. Mr. Lumpkin suggested having EverSource's educational trailer visit communities like his to promote its HeatSmart campaign, and expressed his interest in being involved in such promotion. Ms. Winston recommended checking with the CT Green Bank to see what funding might be available for such installation packages, along with storage batteries. Ms. Salo-Markowski promised to speak with Recycling Coordinator Kim O'Rourke about support for bundling solar and heat-pump systems. Mr. Holden clarified that the current campaign was focused on education rather than installing systems, but that it included having homeowners and landlords sign up for energy audits (by Home Energy Solutions), required in any case for alternative energy installations.

Related topics the Task Force discussed included the recycling of solar panels, the technical requirements and expense of geothermal systems, and the extensive and burdensome documentation needed for LEED certification.

### **Building projects**

Ms. Salo-Markowski asked about a developer's proposal for a large building on the Arcade site; would the Task Force have any say in the energy specifications, and would a building committee be appointed? Mr. Holden reported that 5–7 proposals had been received for the site; he would check with the Department of Economic and Community Development as to the stipulations to be met by potential private developers. He noted that the solar installation on the Recreation Center was almost complete, and the Task Force should tour the facility. A kiosk had been installed with meters tracking the efficiency of the building's systems, which included co-generation for heating the swimming pool. Mr. Marino said he had visited the building and found it impressive.

Mr. Holden reported progress on the design of the boathouse and completion of the design for 80 Harbor Drive. The latter was being evaluated for solar potential, and work was beginning on the interior. At Veterans' Park the pool was due to be poured, and with indoor work completed during the winter, the facility would be ready to open in May.

Mr. Weissberg recommended putting together a simplified bidding process for EV charging stations, with private vendors invited to bid on providing a certain number of EV charging stations

at a rate set by the City. Discussion followed on whether the City or a COG should issue a request for proposals.

## **6. New Business**

### **A. Leafblowers**

Mr. Holden reported that Councilman McKeon had proposed a City ordinance banning gas-powered leafblowers. Mr. Marino suggested that incentives would be more palatable than a ban. The question of whether battery-powered blowers would be sufficiently powerful was raised.

### **B. Recruiting new members**

The Chair mentioned that new members would be needed when several current terms expired. Members of the Task Force expressed some confusion as to the implications of the Charter Revision's stipulations on term limits.

### **C. Next meeting**

The Chair announced that the next meeting would take place in person at City Hall.

## **7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Krishna Winston  
Secretary pro tem