Minutes of the
Somerset County Energy Council
Tuesday, June 19, 2018

Chairman William Amann called the meeting to order at approximately 6:10 PM, and the members pledged allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

The roll was taken and the following members were Present:
William Amann, Chairman
Donald Kasten
Walter Lane
Susan Dorward
Jeffrey Foose
Jeffrey Grant
Paul Drake
Honorable Brian Gallagher, Freeholder Liaison

Absent:
Jeanne Perantoni, Vice Chair
Wayne DeFeo, Secretary
Judith Majewski

Also Present:
Laurette Kratina, Somerset County Planning Division

Approval of the April 17, 2018 Meeting Minutes
The minutes were approved with one change clarifying that Ms. Dorward was referring to a conversation with Mr. Daly. A motion to approve was submitted by Ms. Dorward, which was seconded by Mr. Lane. All approved and the motion carried.

Chairman’s Comments:
Chairman Amann indicated that he was happy with today’s agenda topics since they represent the progress being made by the County.

New Business

SCEC Project Prioritization and Tracking: Chairman Amann pointed out two documents, a Project List/Tracking Sheet and an Energy Efficiency Initiative Work Plan, which were shared with the Council members. The list includes a number of projects that were recommended to the County by the Council over the past two years or so. This list is intended to help the Council to continue moving forward. Chairman Amann and County Planning Division Staff met with Paul McCall to review the list and determine which of the projects he supports, as well as discuss some other energy-related initiatives that are happening at the County level. Chairman Amann provided an overview of the projects in priority order as follows:

County Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Initiative: The highest priority item is the development of an EV Charging Plan for the County. Chairman Amann noted that he has been meeting with the County’s EV Committee as well as with representatives from the NJTPA and Sustainable Jersey (SJ) and a consultant that has been hired by SJ on this initiative, which has not yet been
publicly announced by the Freeholders. The County is developing a plan that provides a strategy for transitioning the County fleet over to electric, and for installing some public charging stations at County facilities. Chairman Amann put the County Public Works Director in touch with representatives from Charge Point. As a result, the County will install Level 2 instead of Level 1 chargers that include management software, without any added expense. Both Chairman Amann and Mr. Lane are also serving on SJ’s EV Task Force. Chairman Amann noted that SJ’s EV consultant works for car companies and described the 5-year design plan that occurs before vehicles hit the show-room. It is clear that all the manufacturers are transitioning to electric now, which has been confirmed by Bloomberg and other sources. Chairman Amann noted that it is easy for folks living in single family homes to have electric cars. They know the car’s range, and can get a full charge when they plug-in each night. However, people moving into multi-family housing located in downtown areas generally do not have access to EV chargers. Legislation was recently proposed to address this issue, which was shared with Council members. In multifamily development projects, there is usually one meter per dwelling unit, and one meter for the common area. People can’t be expected to run extension cords from their apartment window down to the car in the parking lot. It will be fairly easy to install meters in new multifamily projects, but harder to retrofit into existing projects. Other residents with conventional vehicles do not want to be paying other folks to have electric vehicles.

Mr. Amann noted that NYC has already passed a law requiring every parking deck to be EV ready; and that legislation has been proposed in NJ as well.

Ms. Dorward noted that Bridgewater is interested in putting in charging stations in its municipal lot. Kristen Schire from Bridgewater went to the NJTPA workshop yesterday; and she and Ms. Dorward participated in a recent EV webinar. Ms. Dorward believes Ms. Paulson would be very interested in obtaining guidance and support from the County for moving forward with municipal EV initiatives. Mr. Lane noted that there will be a municipal outreach component as part of the County’s EV initiative, but the details are still being finalized. Freeholder Gallagher indicated that he was in Red Bank recently and noticed that there were dedicated EV parking spots. Instead of a parking meter, there was an EV meter, and you simply swipe your credit card. Ms. Dorward noted that RVCC has a few of these as well.

Mr. Grant indicated that he saw a Tesla in the parking garage today, and was wondering what the roll-out is. How fast is this happening? Chairman Amann noted that Volvo has ceased design on all combustion engine vehicles. Mr. Foose noted that Goldman-Sachs put out a huge report on this last week, and stated that If you look at Tesla Series 3, which requires a pre-pay, there is a 65% cancelation rate due to their unique business model, so you have to back these numbers out. He does not think it’s happening as fast as Elon Musk wants you to believe. However, based on a 10-year planning horizon, strategic shifts should be made now to get EV charging station infrastructure in place. Mr. Foose noted this requires action at the municipal zoning board level; and that perhaps EV chargers should be designated an inherently beneficial use similar to nursing homes and schools. Once ordinances are adopted, you will start to see them rolling out. Someone needs to say where EV charges should be located at this point. Mr. Lane noted that the EV Readiness Guide that the NJTPA published should be shared with the Council. This report sparked a lot of interest in all of this. It provides some basic information and presents case studies done in Montclair, Secaucus, Woodbridge and Camden that address some of the issues Jeff Foose just mentioned. He noted that the County’s EV plan will address some of these issues.

Sue Dorward noted that in the conference call she was on last week, someone from Princeton talked about how they put charging stations in one of their lots, which required an ordinance that
allows them to charge a fee for the electric power, in addition to the parking fee. Mr. Foose commented about the EV charging stations at RVCC. He has been attending programs at RVCC that a family member is involved. In the 11 times he was at the College, he did not see any electric vehicles using the charging stations that are there. Ms. Dorward noted that they are in use during regular business hours during the week and that there were three EVs there today. Sometimes all 4 chargers are used, and demand is greatest when classes are in session. Mr. Drake noted that PSEG provided free EV chargers in their garage. Employees that use them do not have to pay for parking. Some employees bought electric cars for this reason. Ms. Dorward noted that RVCC does not charge an electric right now, but they will likely begin to do so as usage increases, and before adding more chargers.

Chairman Amann noted that 70% of people don’t buy new cars, so even if all cars coming on the market are electric, you will still have to wait several years for EV re-sales to increase before you can expect to increase market penetration. Vehicle turn-over must be considered. A lot of people buying Teslas today want them because they are high-performance, not because they are electric. 50 kW fast chargers are out now, there are even faster ones (480 volts) coming out that can fully recharge a car in 20 minutes.

**County Energy Efficiency Initiatives (EEI) Work Plan:** Mr. Amann noted that this is the second highest priority project on the list. The County audited some of its buildings many years ago. The original audit document is lost, but in any case, it is so old that it would have limited usefulness. Ms. Kratina modeled the draft EEI work plan off of the process the County used when it did the first set of audits. Back then, the County put a team together to facilitate the audit completion process and ECM implementation. The draft EEI work plan calls for prioritizing the buildings that the County should have audited, and preparation of the documentation that must be submitted together with the audit grant application. Ms. Dorward asked about the NJ BPU’s Clean Energy Program (CEP) cap of $100,000 per year per jurisdiction. Chairman Amann noted that depending on the size of the building, an audit could cost between $20K and $40K. The County should be able to get 2 to 3 buildings done per year. Doing a few at a time would be appropriate from an ECM standpoint, since it supports incremental implementation.

Ms. Dorward noted that she applied for an audit for RVCC this year. One was done in 2010. She found out that you are not supposed to do any ECM upgrades while the audit is being performed. Some of RVCCs rebates were put on hold because of this policy. RVCC backed out of the audit work because it wanted to continue with implementing the upgrades. Although it makes sense not to have a moving target, this policy should be clear up-front.

Mr. Lane noted that the County Vehicle Maintenance Center and the Recycling Center were selected by Public Works Director McCall to be audited first, because they have not been audited yet. Mr. Grant mentioned the municipal and school buildings audited in 2009 – 2010 through the County Energy Audit Program, and asked what is the life-span of these audits? Chairman Amann noted that ideally, energy tracking should be performed as a way of determining if the original audit is still valid. If we do get the audits done, the CEP consultants will set up Energy Star Portfolio Manager for the audited facilities. Ongoing maintenance of this data is necessary to benefit from this tool.

Mr. Lane noted that Mr. McCall supports moving forward with this and some of the other initiatives. Ms. Kratina noted that the audits, ECM implementation and monitoring through Energy Star Portfolio are all wrapped together in the scope of work in accordance with the previous project structure. She noted that there should already have been a Portfolio Manager Account established around 2003 for the County Complex, which was audited back then. It would be interesting if we could get access to that for comparison with any new data that can be
acquired through current billing records, since ECMs were implemented at the County Complex as a result of the audit.

**LED Pilot Project:** Mr. Lane noted that the County is looking into performing a LED lighting pilot project, which has been included on the list. Ms. Dorward indicated that the College has been putting in LED lighting for a long time, and its interior design faculty got upset about there being too much blue in the light spectrum. They went to some lengths to find LED equipment that does not have this problem. Mr. Lane asked if Ms. Dorward if she would share that information with the Council, since he volunteered to use the Planning Division Offices for the pilot. There are special sun glasses and eye glasses now that filter out blue LED light due to the harm it can cause.

As a side-bar, Chairman Amann noted that he was invited to an event about autonomous vehicles and how they function in parking lots, which allows you to re-think parking lot design since you can fit more vehicles into the same space because of their ability to park themselves.

**Improved Messaging:** Mr. Amann noted that enhancing public outreach and messaging is included in the tracking sheet as a project. Utilization of the county website, increasing the use of infographics, possible use of a video and other mechanisms for informing the public will be considered.

Lower-priority initiatives listed in the document include creation of a back-up power system at the county complex and implementation of a multi-municipal ESIP as follow-up to the ESIP Feasibility Study the Council completed a few years ago as noted by Mr. Amann. These are a heavier lift. Mr. Lane noted the high priority projects are aimed at getting some quick wins that can be built-upon. He also noted that there was no municipal interest in the County Energy Aggregation Program, which is why it came off the list. Mr. Grant noted that Montgomery had an aggregation program, but they defaulted back to the utility company since there was not financial benefit. With regard to the co-generation facility proposed many years ago for the County Complex, there were physical siting constraints. It may be possible that the existing County garage solar array combined with the quick start capability of the new portable generator and a battery storage system and/or another generation source as an alternative to co-gen could accomplish the same goal.

Mr. Amann noted that he will continue to meet with Mr. McCall as needed to keep these things moving forward.

**EV Ready and Right to Charge Legislation:** Copies of these two bills were provided to the Council members in advance of the meeting. Chairman Amann indicated that until now, most of the bills involved the provision of cost incentives. He became aware of A1030 recently, which requires conduit to be in place in all new construction to allow for EV chargers, and prevents condo associations from restricting the use of EV chargers. The vehicle owner cannot be prevented from installing a charger by the condo association, provided all safety and installation requirements are met. This will allow folks living in multi-family housing to have EVs, since relying on public charging will not work. Public charging stations are intended to allow drivers to extend their range. Regular charging must be accomplished at home. Mr. Foose asked whether there could potentially be a constitutional challenge to this as a result of an inherent mandate to provide EV charging ability. If a homeowner’s association does not want to allow EV charging, should we be forcing them to? Associations are extremely strict. It is conceivable that there could be some push-back. Transformer boxes will be needed that associations may not want to have. Market forces can potentially influence this since projects that provide EV chargers could out-compete those that do not. He asked if this could be treated as an inherently beneficial use
in order to avoid these kinds of challenges. Assemblyman Kennedy from Somerset County is one of the Bill’s sponsors. Freeholder Gallagher recommended letting the legislation evolve a bit, rather than taking a position on it right at the beginning. Mr. Drake noted the technology is fairly new and not familiar. Some people view it similarly to a gas station in terms of land use. A commercial scale charging facility comparable to a gas station may require another approach. Freeholder Gallagher felt that the market is may drive this to a large extent. If a developer perceives an opportunity to attract buyers who are going to have EVs, the developer will be more likely to want to provide EV charging. If over the next 10 years they see the shift to EVs occurring, they will want to retrofit, and work with the towns to allow that to happen. Government can’t always fix it… the market can sometimes fix it faster. Mr. Amann noted that the developer Steve Kalafer is making all of his new buildings in NJ EV ready. That may drive the market because he has an amenity that others do not. The Council can encourage municipalities to promote installation of EV infrastructure in their redevelopment plans.

PSEG proposed 50,000 charging stations in its recent request to the NJBPU. It will be going through the hearing process in the coming weeks according to Mr. Drake. Mr. Amann noted that the Task Force recommended reaching out to Mike Savage regarding PSEG’s EV initiatives. Ken Asser should be contacted according to Mr. Drake.

The bill – A1376 was discussed. Ms. Dorward also brought to everyone’s attention a few other bills that the Council may want to look at concerning charging infrastructure. She noted that there is a federal initiative involving the provision of charging stations along major thoroughfares such as Routes 78 & 287, and another bill involves a rebate program.

Chairman Amann indicated we will continue to monitor legislation.

**County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) – Energy Resiliency Framework:** Ms. Kratina e-mailed members a copy of the Draft Energy Resiliency Framework text, which will be part of the Hazard Mitigation Plan update. She noted there are few additional components that have not been shared yet with the Council. Namely, the Energy Resiliency Toolkit (Matrix) comprised of an Excel table which includes three main goals, a handful of objectives associated with each goal, and about a dozen implementation strategies. The HMP Project Management Team asked for this table to be simplified. After this work is done, it will also be shared with the Council. The text document represents a “primer” that describes the energy system, its vulnerabilities to hazards, and what can be done to improve its resiliency. It is not a highly technical document, and excludes a lot of detail. Yet, some people may still perceive it to be pretty heavy in terms of content, which is difficult to avoid. Responsible parties and potential partners associated with recommended actions are identified. Most of what needs to be done is beyond what municipalities have control over. However municipalities still play an important role in understanding of energy needs and advocating for their residents and businesses. Ms. Kratina noted that the energy system in terms of technology and policy is evolving and changing very quickly, and this document will potentially need to be updated in a few years to remain relevant. It is very important for all players and stakeholders to work collaboratively to address the weak links in the system that were revealed when Sandy hit, while achieving the system resiliency enhancements associated with grid modernization.

Ms. Dorward agreed that it is a great broad-brush primer. She commented about the table summarizing municipal activities that was included with the document. She was surprised at how many municipalities still need things as simple as generators. Ms. Kratina noted that a questionnaire was used to gage how much municipalities know about the energy assets located in their town, the condition of the energy systems serving their communities and what utility companies are doing to improve them, and local energy resiliency needs. Very little of this
information seems to be available to local officials. Warren’s request for help minimizing “end-of-the-line” outage issues was noted. A municipal comment concerning eligibility for funds to buy a generator for a private facility (church) used as a shelter was discussed. Freeholder Gallagher noted that if it is a dedicated shelter, it should be able to apply. He then spoke about some of the resiliency policies adopted by Somerville, which mandates the provision of generators in multifamily attached housing facilities in redevelopment areas that can enable sheltering in place, thereby reducing public sector sheltering costs. As a result, the number of people using the shelters during storm events is declining. Natural gas generators are preferred.

Ms. Kratina noted that Mr. Drake already provided some great feedback, and invited everyone to submit any additional comments, which will be reviewed by the Project Management Team. Release of the draft HMP in early fall is expected. The Energy Framework is an add-on that goes above what FEMA requires. Mr. Lane noted that towns can advocate for resiliency improvements, although implementation responsibility often rests with the utilities. Energy conservation and other measures that indirectly support energy resiliency were noted. In response to an inquiry by Chairman Amann, Ms. Kratina noted that water supply resiliency was not addressed in this round of updating the HMP due to resource constraints. However, it could be addressed in the next update cycle. Chairman Amann noted that water efficiency and infrastructure upgrades can help make the water system more resilient. Freeholder Gallagher noted that towns are now being forced by NJDEP to address I & I in the sanitary sewer system, which can compensate for capacity constraints especially during storm events. None of Somerset County is affected by combined sewer and storm systems.

Ms. Dorward noted that the report indicates only 3 gas stations received funding for back-up power from the State. Mr. Lane indicated that this could be due to the fact that Somerset is not a designated Sandy County. Also, Ms. Dorward also noted that the report indicates New Jersey ranks 47th in terms of roll-out of smart grid technology. Mr. Amann noted that many obstacles must be overcome. Ms. Kratina attended the NJAEE Conference last month where she learned that an allocation of broadband band width to utilities is needed so they can take advantage of the sensor technology and analytics that are now available that eliminates the need to customer phone calls. NJ is at square one. It is being used in other states. Policy changes are also needed that addresses how this can be paid for. There is a Federal policy mandate to implement smart grid technology nationwide.

Ms. Dorward is interested in possibly having the Council put together a conference. She suggested that NJDEP could potentially provide assistance in organizing this event. Chairman Amann noted that we have done this sort of event in the past at RVCC together with the Business Partnership.

Mr. Amann noted that we will forgo Committee Reports due to the detailed project list discussion that covered this material earlier.

Motion to adjourn was submitted by Paul Drake and seconded by Walter Lane. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:45 PM.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for August 21st.