

Arlington County C2E2 Energy Committee

Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

7:30 am – 9:30 am

Agenda Items

1. Greetings and introductions (7:30)

- Tim welcomed everyone to the meeting. He asked Energy Committee (EC) members to think through the budget discussions from earlier this week and to be prepared to offer input later today during that agenda item.

2. Review/approve agenda and February meeting summary (7:35)

- Today's meeting agenda and the February meeting summary were both approved

3. Public Comment on General Topics (7:40)

- None.

4. Monthly update from the AIRE team (7:45) – Rich Dooley and Demetra McBride

- The Dominion Energy Maplewood Project which the County benefits from contractually in its Virtual Power Purchase Agreement, has experienced project delays due to worldwide events and impacts to the solar PV sector. In addition, there are project permitting issues that are moving forward slower than expected.
 - Dominion Energy has issued Force Majeure letters.
 - We currently hear from Dominion Energy that the project should be operational this summer (compared to this Spring which was originally expected).
- The CEP Roadmap consultant (ICF) is incorporating comments into the draft document and by the end of the month County staff hope for a final draft.
 - Staff appreciates the work and comments from this group, and John Bloom and Scott Brideau for participating in project team meetings with the consultant on behalf of the EC
 - Demetra spoke with EC members this past week about the CEP Roadmap. EC has comments on the CEP Roadmap
- Thanks go out to Joan McIntyre for her comments during the budget session; we also noted John Bloom's presence in the meeting, and thanks to everyone who participated virtually live or who watched the video afterwards
- We're hiring! A new Energy Program Specialist is coming onboard April 11th. We're also working to fill the Outreach Specialist and the GB Program Manager positions.
 - If the CB approves another FTE to be added to AIRE, Demetra noted that we'd like to talk with the EC about the priorities we seek for that position
- Tim E. showed the chart showing the timeline of AIRE projects
 - ACTION: Tim requested to have an update provided to the group
- Additional project updates include:
 - Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) Comparative Study is being peer reviewed – completed Q2
 - ARTBus Feasibility Study – has grown in scope – ready by end Q2

- Decarbonization of Transportation (DecTrans) Plan – draft plan by Q4
- Risk Assessment Management Plan (RAMP) – internal reviews have slowed progress, plus scope has changed since we’ve learned more during the course of the project, e.g., inundation maps showed additional concerns– we expect the draft by Q4
- **ACTION:** Staff will update the chart to show the new timelines and send that to the EC and to C2E2 when it is ready

5. Arlington County 2023 budget discussion (7:55) – Claire Noakes

- There are 4 areas of energy investments presented during the CB Work Session with DES: 1) \$1.4M toward CEP execution, including a \$1M CEP Action Fund; 2) \$1.5M for facility investment, 3) \$0.8M for vehicle electrification, and 4) another 40.8M for other energy investment.
- Which County facilities are slated to get assessed for solar PV?
 - **ACTION:** Steve Burr will provide updates on the facilities on which solar PV assessments are to be done
- Conversion of Dominion streetlights to LED – why did we spend \$400k+ of County money to do that?
- Jonathan M.: The CMO has failed to do what the CB said needs to be done for the County to provide a whole of government approach to climate change and energy issues
- Working Group Leads – Tim would like to hear from Working Group Leads regarding Claire’s points and/or anything else found in the budget deliberations
- John B.: There are three issues that the Board is likely to be asked to consider that relate to renewable electricity uptake in the County:
 - Whether to direct the County Manager to provide a Chief Sustainability Officer or similar structural change to create a high-level focal point for a whole-of-government climate response
 - Whether to provide for greater investment in community-facing GHG reduction efforts
 - How to advance consideration of Community Choice Aggregation.
- **[Stopped here to accommodate the 8:30 am agenda item. Budget discussion picked up again here after the 8:30 agenda item]**
- Rick K.: Not sure where the funds exist to get the 83 EVs.
 - Also, facility investment money – when new HVAC equipment is added, are staff assuming that EV chargers could be put in place and what electric capacity is needed for each of those cases?
 - The budget is not granular enough to convince us that there is money (and a process) in place to ensure that staff can address these sorts of future concerns.
 - There is concern about possible disconnects between the DMF/Budget folks, Procurement, and the technical project managers.
- Kevin V.: The County should establish a Social Cost of Carbon and ensure that those costs are included in the decision-making and project cost analysis processes.
- Who will have say, influence, control over the \$1M CEP Action Fund?
 - We should tell the CB that the EC thinks AIRE should at the very least have influence to ensure the money is going toward the priority items in the CEP.
- A lot of things were discussed today that did not show up in the C2E2 meeting.
 - **ACTION:** Tim advocates someone on the EC communicates today’s thoughts to C2E2 for their consideration.
 - Claire will create some bullets and send those out in an e-mail, asking for other EC members to supplement as possible to finalize the document that can be sent to C2E2. Joan said if something can be sent to C2E2 next week, that would allow a letter to be developed in time for the 3/29 public comment on the budget.
 - Joan noted that electrification, especially on buildings, has not been discussed or addressed today.

6. Arlington County communications team (8:30)—Stephanie Gagnon (main EC POC) & Bryna Helfer (Asst. County Manager - Director of Communications and Public Engagement)

- A. Community engagement through online platforms: How can the EC let the community know what we're doing, when meetings are, and what topics meetings will cover?
 - B. Community engagement through physical presence: Where can the EC go out to shake hands and engage personally with the community?
 - C. What does the EC have to verify with the County before communicating with the community?
 - D. Where can we find any guidance on messaging/branding we should adhere to when engaging online or in the community?
- Bryna Helfer was introduced. She introduced Dan Adams (County Board – Dir. Policy and Communication); Jessica Baxter (CMO – Director of Strategic Communications); Katie O'Brien (DES – Acting Communications Manager)
 - Bryna noted that energy matters and sustainability are wicked problems we need to address. We need to find the best ways where we can all work together to address these issues
 - We've looked for opportunities for engagement
 - Engagement and communications need to be woven throughout everything we do.
 - Staff have found that social change and behavioral change happens by a community member being connected with someone who is passionate and trusted.
 - Tim introduced EC members – Stephanie Gagnon and Kip Malinowsky – they are EC leads on community engagement
 - Tim would really like to see more done by the EC on community involvement. For instance, there was no public comment at the start of today's meeting.
 - This is not the *last* meeting we plan to have on this topic.
 - Prompting questions:
 - 1) What is the EC's goals for engagement?
 - 2) Who are your stakeholders, key audiences?
 - 3) Are there any strategies we can get to for #1 and 2 above?
 - Kip:
 - Goals: There are things that we need and want to do, and awareness needs to be raised about the County programs.
 - Outcomes: Achieving 100% renewable electricity target by 2035.
 - Audience: all Arlington residents. Expand membership
 - Stephanie:
 - To add, Building Science should be used and available for residents to make an educated decision.
 - Membership – increase diversity. Make sure LMI communities are represented.
 - Bryna – Regarding diversity: Where are the gaps?
 - Stephanie: a lot of older, white males are here. We need ethnic and racial diversity, and we need to be intentional about ensuring all economic levels are represented on the EC. Also, reaching out to renters is important.
 - Kip: As we make energy project decisions, renters need to be represented. 100% RE – how do we address up-front costs for all economic levels? Also, how do we engage with people who work two or more jobs and don't have time to participate in meetings like today's meeting?
 - Bryna: Joan, what are your thoughts on diversity, stakeholders?
 - Joan M: What is not reflected in the budget is developing a robust engagement with the public and explaining what we need them to do for the community to reach its goals. We can't focus solely on County operations. As Greg noted, it is a whole-of-community approach that is needed.

- C2E2 coordinates with other groups, non-profits, but more can be done to get out a compelling message that resonates with a variety of audiences.
- C2E2 is also facing issues regarding engagement with the community. Commissioners often hold full-time jobs and don't have the time to devote to things outside of the monthly meetings. How can we engage with people where they are?
 - John B.: A lot of EC and C2E2 discussions are really interesting, and he thinks a lot of people in Arlington would be interested in what we talk about – there are a lot of people passionate about addressing climate change. How do reach out to engage with them better? Diversity to consider: business perspectives need to be better represented.
 - Bryna – A few thoughts on what the County has done:
 - Building awareness: we'd like to work with EC to develop a campaign and making it multi-tiered. Simply doing one press release does not do it.
 - The Complete Vaccination Committee (CVC) is an example for us to look at. The CVC had about 40+ passionate people. They had a Day of Action – put out yard signs, held phone banks, held pop-up events, went into affordable housing complexes. Similar to what we're doing for Vision Zero – we are getting out to the community.
 - We might think about partnering with other organizations, those that have energy issues and climate change on their policy agenda. Also, faith-based community could be tapped. Let's do some cool things together.
 - Jessica: She worked in DES for 7+ years before coming to her CMO job, so she knows the AIRE work well. We have talked about AIRE communications planning before she transitioned to the CMO.
 - When looking at campaigns – how do we demystify energy and the CEP?
 - Why are carbon emissions important?
 - The Residential Parking Program (RPP) is a very technical program. With the RPP, we established a baseline to understand what level were at before developing a Communications Plan for that parking program project.
 - We have many tools available to push out the messaging. For example, Inside Arlington has 150,000 subscribers to reach mass audiences.
 - Think also about translating for ESL audiences.
 - Katie: Hearing the EC goals today is good, and they mesh with the draft Roadmap. We can leverage our resources to empower individuals to help the community reach its goals.
 - Scott D.: Residential and commercial sectors experience. Channels to reach these different sectors is important. Bryna mentioned segmentation.
 - Commercial: technical and business cases are needed to convince business owners and property managers and affect change.
 - Next steps:
 - Bryna: We could white board draw up segments we want to address, which can then lead to strategy development and then behavioral change. Maybe talk about Vision Zero lessons learned.
 - Lay some groundwork, look at the Roadmap, build a 6-month campaign and strategy.
 - Joan M: Climate change touches everyone and everything. How do we effectively not leave anyone behind? Also, Zero Waste Plan is something that will be based on behavioral change
 - Bryna – Comms staff (include Bryna, Jessica, and Katie) can have a follow-up meeting with Kip and Stephanie – and ask others who would like to join. Timing will be based on availability of EC members.
 - Tim E. suggested him, Joan M., Kip, Stephanie to represent the EC.
 - Bryna – Noted that Mark Schwartz directed Bryna and others to help out the EC, and that's why staff are here to help.

7. Update on working groups (9:00) – Tim Effio

- If you have not signed up for a Working Group, please let Tim know of your interest.
- Today was an example of how a Working Group can ID an issue and we can have County staff, other experts to talk about those issues.
 - Another example of doing this could be CCAs.
 - Each Working Group should ID possible topics to be highlighted during future EC meetings.
- Keep having Working Group meetings in between EC meetings – 30 minutes or so if fine for those Working Group meetings.

8. Adjourn (9:30)

- Meeting adjourned at 9:35 am