



## Environmental and Energy Stewardship Subcommittee

200 College Street, Room 310

April 21, 2023

### Meeting Minutes

#### Subcommittee Members Present

Chairman Newman, Commissioner Sloan, Commissioner Wells, Councilperson Ullman, Chris Link

#### Staff Members Present

Sybil Tate, Jeremiah LeRoy, Jennifer Harrison, Dane Pederson, Kristy Smith, Max Taintor, Ashley Featherstone, Jackie Hamstead, Avni Naik

Commissioner Sloan called the meeting to order at 10:01 am.

Motion to approve the April agenda and the March meeting minutes passed unanimously.

#### Public Comment:

No public comment.

#### Clean Energy Fund Update

- Presented by Jennifer Weiss and Melissa Malkin-Weber Co-Directors of NC Clean Energy Fund
- Mission of the NC Clean Energy Fund
  - 501c-3 non-profit, not a bank
  - Looking to find gaps in financial services and move markets to strengthen clean energy lending and acceleration of the clean energy space
  - Sample projects: Electrification, battery storage, renewable energy
  - Looking for scalable pilot programs with 2-3 sustainable financing products
  - Goal is to grow pipeline of fundable products and position NC to access capital
- Buncombe County pilot opportunity
  - Standardized consumer loan product to drive electrification/ efficiency
    - Residential loans for owner-occupied homes with 1-4 units
    - Loan amounts \$500-\$50,000. Up to 25% of loan amount could be used for work (i.e. roof repair) not directly related to clean energy
  - Pilot needs financing platform (Smart-E) and loan loss reserve
  - Focus on 1-2 technologies like heat pumps or heat pump hot water heaters
    - This would limit # of contractors and scope of outreach/ communication
    - Heat pumps functioned as the example in the discussion, but other ideas, including solar, will be assessed
    - Estimated Heat Pump Campaign participation in Buncombe County: 429 homeowners across 3 years.
  - Sample loan terms come from Inclusive Prosperity Capital product (Smart-E). If the lender wants to participate, they would have to agree to these terms.
    - Loans accessible to residents with low credit (as low as 580)
    - Everyone gets the same interest rate
    - Loan terms are good for contractors too. Receive 1/3 of payment at closing.



## Environmental and Energy Stewardship Subcommittee

200 College Street, Room 310

April 21, 2023

- No dealer fees or origination fees
- Program will weave-in benefits/ incentives (IRA)- One stop shop for the homeowner
- Local lenders also benefit
  - Loan loss support
  - Software platform simplifies process
  - Drives volume, creates more customers
- Who Does What?
  - Community Outreach- County and partners
  - Outreach to Contractors- NC Clean Energy Fund, County and partners
  - Engage lenders- NC Clean Energy Fund, County and partners
  - Organize and service loans- participating lenders
  - Administer loss reserve, loan platform- NC Clean Energy Fund
- Loan loss reserve needs
  - Year 1: 100K, years 2 and 3: additional \$70K
  - Over time loans get paid down. That money may be reallocated in the future.
- County could increase impact with interest rate buy downs
- Councilperson Ullman makes a motion to pursue partnership with the NC Clean Energy Fund to invest in the loan loss reserve with an appropriation of \$100,000. Motion passed unanimously.

### Waste Pro Survey Update:

Waste Pro Survey is out. Received ~1400 response so far. Formal briefing to Commissioners in June.

### Solid Waste Ordinance Amendments

- Adjust tipping fees so that County can impose additional fees for loads that have a substantial amount of recyclables. Also proposed in fee schedule.
- Uncovered/ unsecured loads cause litter and safety issues. Amendment adds civil penalty that Solid Waste can assess at the scale house. \$10 for residential, \$25 for commercial.
- Working with City on Interlocal Agreement for Compost drop-off

### Landfill Gas to Energy Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)

- Collect gas for odor mitigation, permit regulation, and to generate electricity/ reduce GHG
- REOI- to determine if County's option to pursue alternative technologies
- Timeline: Issue in May, submission deadline June, bring findings back to the EESS in late 2023
- Duke is obligated to purchase renewable electricity until 2024. Unclear if they will resign the PPA
- Upcoming costs
  - LFGTE will need \$600K in generator maintenance if FY25
  - Upcoming well field improvements estimated at \$1.3 million
  - Some of this work would still be required without producing electricity
- Buncombe County has 500 SCFM flow rate which may limit options
- City is exploring funding for Solid Waste Master Plan which may be opportunity for collaboration



## Environmental and Energy Stewardship Subcommittee

200 College Street, Room 310

April 21, 2023

### Conservation Easement Criteria

- Two boards oversee the process: Agriculture Advisory Board (AAB) and Land Conservation Advisory Board (LCAB)
- BOC feedback on the AAB Bond ranking system
  - Encourage leveraged funding
  - Encourage charitable landowner donations
  - Don't factor development pressure into ranking system to avoid conflict with comp plan
- AAB ranking system summary
  - Land Evaluation (40%): Farmland Soils Assessment (20 pts), Forestland Soils Assessment (20 pts)
  - Site Assessment (60%): Clustering Potential (35 pts), Farmland Potential (20 pts), Funding and Donation Leveraged (5 points)
- LCAB ranking system focuses on partner qualifications and conservation value of project
- Requirements for both ranking systems: The Bond can fund up to 50% of easement after other funding sources have been exhausted and landowner must donate 25% of easement value
- Commissioner Wells made a motion to support the proposed Conservation Easement criteria for the bond funds. Motion passed unanimously.
- Criticism was that one bond support development (affordable housing) and the other supports conservation. Process suggestion for future work: consultation between conservation staff and development staff.

### Public Input and Engagement

- Goals of Public Input are to enhance equity, transparency, and access
- Public Input capabilities: live stream meetings, virtual public comment, subscribers
- EESS agrees to start live-streaming at the May meeting
- Virtual public comment is built into the system and will be managed by CAPE. EESS agrees to allow virtual public comment.

### Future Meetings

- No additions to proposed meetings

### Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Sloan at 11:59 am.