

**Minutes of the
Somerset County Energy Council Meeting
Tuesday, December 1, 2020**

Chairman William Amann called the meeting to order at approximately 6:10 PM. 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
Jeanne Perantoni, Vice Chair
Paul Drake
William Dondiego
Jeffrey Grant
William Knox
Walter Lane
Monica Lazer

Absent

Wayne DeFeo
Axel Breidenbruch
Jeffrey Foose

Also Present

Zenon Tech-Czarny, Sustainable Jersey/Sustainability Institute, TCNJ
Roy Horowitz, Somerset County Office of Emergency Management
Honorable Melonie Marano, Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders, 2020
Liaison to the Energy Council
Laurette Kratina, PP, AICP, Somerset County Planning Division, Staff Liaison to the
Energy Council

Approval of the August 18, 2020 Meeting Summary: Ms. Kratina e-mailed another copy of the summary to everyone based on Mr. Grant's request. A motion to approve the minutes was submitted by Ms. Perantoni, which was seconded by Mr. Lane. All were in favor. Ms. Kratina noted that the draft summary of the October 20th meeting is under review by the Chairman and Mr. Lane and therefore not ready to be acted-upon at this meeting. It will be ready for consideration at the Council's first meeting in 2021.

Chairman's Comments: Chairman Amann noted that he and Mr. Grant presented the RE&T Committee's PowerPoint comprised of recommendations on the NJ Energy Master Plan at

the November 10th Meeting of the Board of Chosen Freeholders, which was very well received. He complemented Mr. Grant for his outstanding presentation. He noted that the Freeholders' asked for the Council's assistance on a few additional initiatives as follow-up to this effort, which will be discussed later in the meeting. He also thanked Mr. Dondiego, Mr. Knox, Mr. Breidenbruch and Mr. Lane for their assistance.

New Business:

Sustainable Jersey Utility Data and Map Apps: Zenon Tech-Czarny, Sustainability Institute, TCNJ: Chairman Amann welcomed and introduced guest speaker Zenon Tech-Czarny. He was invited to provide more information about the energy utility data Sustainable Jersey (SJ) has acquired, and their mapping work. Through the Zoom screen-sharing mode, Mr. Tech-Czarny showed his PowerPoint presentation to the group and described the data initiatives SJ is working on. He discussed the energy utility data that was recently released by SJ, noting that they have been working on collecting and compiling investor-owned utility data for several years. This data was recently aggregated to the municipal level. Annual data from 2015 through 2019 has been collected, and work compiling data for 2020 is underway. It can be downloaded from the resources section of SJ's website in pdf and Excel format. Data for all energy utilities in the State is available for 2015. The 2016 – 2019 data is partial, depending on what utility service area a municipality is in. 2016 and 2017 data are not available for JCP&L, although it is available for 2017 and 2018. SJ recently acquired large amounts of data from a few gas utilities, which fills in the gaps for some towns. Complete data for Atlantic City Electric is currently not available. Data on other heating fuels has been compiled in addition to kilowatts and therms for electric and natural gas obtained from utility companies in NJ. By using heating fuel data on oil, propane and wood collected by the Census Bureau via the American Community Survey, a more complete carbon footprint can be developed when this information is translated into carbon emissions by municipality. NJDEP utilized the carbon emissions data that was released last month by SJ to prepare some GIS maps. Mr. Tech-Czarny showed the NJDEP maps that illustrate total electricity and natural gas usage by municipality statewide. Per-capita energy usage data was mapped, but not per-household usage data. Per-household information would enable a better comparison of energy usage among municipalities, especially when the mix of housing types is taken into consideration. In Somerset County, the less-urbanized municipalities with a lower proportion of attached housing types had higher electric and natural gas consumption per capita compared to more urbanized areas with more attached housing types. He showed maps created by NJDEP that break down electricity and natural gas data by user category (residential, industrial, commercial, and street lighting). This week, Mr. Tech-Czarny prepared a breakdown of residential usage of electricity, natural gas and other heating fuels and associated CO₂ equivalents in comparison to single family homes as a percent of municipal housing stock. He was able to show using a scatter-plot graph that statewide, municipalities with a lower proportion of single-family homes have lower CO₂ emissions per household compared to those with high proportions of single-family homes. This confirms that municipalities dominated by large homes on large lots tend to be the

largest residential energy users/CO2 emitters. He shared the results of an analysis that ranked municipalities based on CO2 emissions per household based on the characteristics of their housing stock, which verified the statewide findings. He used data for Bernards Township, which has both areas of concentrated attached housing and low-density single-family neighborhoods, to illustrate the importance of understanding local land use patterns when interpreting this data. Freeholder Marano commented about the impact seasonal housing can have on the results. Mr. Tech-Czarny noted that shore communities had to be omitted from this analysis for this reason since they are not comparable with the rest of the state. His work thus far focuses on stationary sources of CO2 emissions. SJ has begun collecting data for non-stationary sources. He now has data on vehicle miles traveled from all metropolitan planning organizations in New Jersey and is striving to present this information to the municipal level to show how much CO2 emissions are associated with the transportation sector. The goal is to combine this information to create GHG inventories and emissions profiles for all municipalities in the State. An important next step is to post this data and some interactive maps on-line so that it can be used by municipalities and green teams. He showed some of the interactive maps he has developed, including one that provided information on electric and gas utility service territories overlaid with municipal boundaries; and a statewide energy systems map that shows power generators, transmission lines, substations, pipelines, compressor stations, solar arrays, wind and other features. Mr. Lane asked if the energy systems map is publicly facing, since the county was precluded from making this information available to the public as part of the updated countywide hazard mitigation plan. Mr. Tech-Czarny noted that he used information available to the public through the Federal Energy Administration and the Dept. of Homeland Security to create this map and is not aware of any restrictions. Ms. Kratina agreed to pursue clarification from Chris Testa, the State's Hazard Mitigation Coordinator and share what she learns. He also showed a map of commercial and industrial properties across the state relative to opportunity incentive zones, which is a resource for municipal green teams pursuing SJ certification in the area business outreach to promote energy efficiency in the non-residential sector. SJ will be helping NJDEP promote use of their on-line solar siting analysis and community solar siting tools which are based on a land prioritizing and ranking system. These tools show how much capacity is available on the grid, which is a factor in siting solar. He showed an interactive map that was created to provide information about all the community solar pilot sites across the state. It can be used by people interested in subscribing. Mr. Tech-Czarny described the data center that SJ is creating through which it will make this and other information available. It will be organized into four main data categories: municipal utility, transportation, Census and GHG emissions data; Clean Energy Program data; interactive maps; and other State resources such as the NJDEP maps and data. In recognition of the Council's interest in community energy planning, Mr. Tech-Czarny noted that these resources are intended to support this. The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) supports SJ's effort to provide this data to local government so they do not have to do this work themselves. Information on the number of solar and clean energy projects underway and completed, number of electric vehicles, breakdowns of GHG emissions by

sector and other data will also be provided by SJ to support community energy planning efforts. Mr. Drake noted that it would be valuable to break the data down to the Census-block level based on household income, to help identify low income areas who would benefit greatest from energy efficiency improvement savings, and noted that emphasis will be placed on assisting environmental justice neighborhoods in the coming months. In response to a question from Chairman Amann, Mr. Tech-Czarny noted that once the data is released through SJ's new on-line data center, it will work on promoting its use at the local level through training programs and webinars. Communities engaging in SJ's energy actions and community energy plans will be directed to these resources.

Chairman Amann noted that the BPU has grants available for communities that want to develop community energy plans. The Council learned that Bergen County received one of these grants. The NJBPU expected these plans to be supported by a lot of detailed analyses, yet the maximum grant award is only \$25,000. He indicated it would be excellent to be able to use this data to develop an energy plan for Somerset County. He expressed concern that unless the BPU increases the funding cap for county-level plans, he does not see how this can move forward without additional funding. Mr. Tech-Czarny agreed that the grant amount is a limitation, but if municipalities worked together and pooled grant resources, they may be able to amass enough funding to accomplish this. He noted that in addition to providing the data to reduce some of the legwork involved, SJ is also developing a guide and model work plan for preparing a community energy plan. The way SJ sees this is that by providing these resources, municipalities should not have to hire consultants to re-invent the wheel, and a lot of the work can be done on a tighter budget, while freeing-up resources for stakeholder engagement and other work. SJ is almost ready to share its work on the guide and work plan template and would be interested in working with Somerset County to potentially test it out. Ms. Perantoni mentioned that it might be possible for RVCC to develop a community energy planner certification program to support green job growth in this area, and incorporate community engagement techniques such as community energy surveys, data analysis and implementation strategies so municipalities can take advantage of this. Mr. Drake asked if SJ can use its data to develop greenhouse gas emissions multipliers specific to each housing type such as single-family detached homes or attached condominium units for projecting GHG emissions associated with new development or retrofitting existing development. Mr. Tech-Czarny noted that SJ is trying to work with Princeton University to do some analysis of this type but he is not able to say much more about this at this time. It may be possible to identify municipalities with specific housing stock typologies for the purpose of understanding energy and GHG emissions associated with certain building types. The utility data is aggregated to the municipal level, which prevents a more granular analysis. Mr. Dondiego asked about the availability of other funding resources for energy initiatives by municipalities, local business, and residents. Mr. Tech-Czarny cited the many incentives available through the NJ Clean Energy Program like Direct Install and Home Performance with Energy Star. There are also some grants from the NJBPU for purchasing electric vehicles and charging infrastructure. SJ can provide more information on funding resources if the Council is interested. Chairman Amann thanked Mr. Tech-Czarny for his hard work and all

the information he provided to the Council during the meeting, noting that these new resources will open up a lot of opportunities for developing community energy plans in the future.

Chairman Amann noted that Roy Horowitz from the County Office of Emergency Management is present and invited him to speak. Mr. Horowitz noted that his office recently formed a Somerset County Power Restoration Working Group to address power outages for when the Somerset County Emergency Operations Center is activated, including the development of guidelines for how work can proceed. Representatives of this committee will be able to provide the Council with a brief presentation on this topic in the future. Chairman Amann indicated that he looks forward to this, and that it ties into the Council's energy resilience goals. Mr. Amann noted that the Council is still waiting for legislators to act on the proposed microgrid bill that will enable deployment of this technology to ensure power to critical infrastructure and facilities in the County, which ties-in with this work.

2021 Meeting Schedule: Chairman Amann noted that the Executive Committee met last week and began to look at a schedule for next year. For the past couple of years, the Council's first meeting was held in February. This group recommends having the first meeting in January instead. January 19th, which is the third Tuesday, would be the first meeting, and the group would convene every other month on the third Tuesday thereafter. A draft schedule based on this was shared so that any meeting conflicts could be identified. Everyone agreed with January 19th as the first meeting date in 2021.

Old Business

Follow-up to November 10, 2020 Meeting of the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders:

Chairman Amann noted that as follow-up to the November 10th meeting, the Council has been asked to work on the Green Jobs Workforce Development Initiative recommended in the Council's PowerPoint presentation. He noted that this is already under discussion. Both he and Bill Knox and Walter Lane have been involved, and other members may be pulled in as needed. Mr. Lane noted that he is waiting for one other person to respond back so that he can schedule the first meeting of this group within the next two weeks. In addition to the Energy Council representatives, the initial group also includes Paul Grzella from the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board, Chris Edwards and John Maddocks from the Business Partnership, Mike McDonough from RVCC and Chrys Harttraft, Superintendent of the County VoTech. Freeholder Marano as well as Colleen Mahr, Deputy County Administrator are also involved and are very supportive of this effort.

Chairman Amann noted that the NJ Economic Development Authority (EDA) released an RFP for the construction of the port in Salem County that will support offshore windmill construction, as an example of the activity that has already begun. Freeholder Marano noted that she is aware of surveying work that occurred in Barnegat Bay this summer associated with installation of the electric conduit cables associated with this project.

Mr. Lane noted that another work assignment given to the Council by the Freeholders is to prepare resolutions voicing support by the county and its municipalities of the goals in the State Energy Master Plan. Freeholder Marano requested that a sample municipal resolution be ready for introduction to the municipalities during the first quarter of 2021. She noted that it can be hard for municipalities to create this type of resolution, and it would be very helpful for the Council to provide a template and guidance on what they can do within their municipality to support the plan. Ms. Perantoni suggested the Council provide a webinar that provides background on the State Energy Plan like the one Mr. Grant's Committee provided for the Freeholders that also ties in the municipal resolution. Freeholder Marano agreed with this suggestion and noted a video could also potentially be prepared to accomplish this. Chairman Amann concurred, noting that it would be difficult to ask them to adopt a resolution about something they may not be familiar with. Ms. Perantoni noted that it would be informative for the public as well if this information is posted on the County website. Mr. Lane suggested that a webinar could be recorded and made available in this way. Mr. Lane also suggested that the resolution could potentially urge municipalities to partner with the county on the creation of a countywide energy plan, which could provide the framework that municipal plans can fit into. Participation in the countywide energy plan could be used to incentivize municipal adoption of the resolution. The linkage could also be made regarding municipalities earning SJ points by adopting the resolution. Freeholder Morano also noted that this could potentially dovetail with another initiative that she is coordinating and that is under development by the County IT Division that she is striving to roll-out during the first quarter of 2021.

Mr. Dondiego asked about whether the County's Green Leadership Hub could be utilized in 2021 to inform and connect local Green Teams to the Council's work and resources. He also expressed interest in serving on the Education and Awareness Committee in the coming year. Mr. Lane noted that a meeting was held in January 2020 by the Planning Board that was hosted by Hillsborough's Green Team aimed at relaunching the Hub. He noted a survey of the Hub members was conducted and participants identified energy & electric vehicles, recycling, and environmental restoration as their primary areas of interest. The pandemic prevented more Hub activities from taking place. His goal is to have the Hub back up and running when a return to normalcy occurs. Mr. Dondiego offered his assistance to the County in this regard, together with his ongoing support for the Green Team in Hillsborough.

As another follow-up item, Chairman Amann recalled the list of six (6) action items that were submitted to the Freeholders earlier this year. He noted that some ad-hoc committees/work groups may be formed in 2021 to help move these forward as necessary. Having the Council meet every other month, which would allow the committees to meet on the off months. Moving the first meeting to January was done by the Executive Committee to keep the momentum going as noted by Mr. Lane.

Committee Chair Reports

Education and Awareness: Ms. Perantoni noted that her committee was working on a few initiatives prior to the slowdown caused by COVID-19, including the Accessory Dwelling Unit webinar series. She noted that the committee's priorities are set by the Freeholders and can see the need to support the preparation of the resolutions and associated informational webinar in the first quarter of 2021.

Renewable Energy & Technology: Now that the Energy Master Plan presentation initiative is complete, Mr. Grant noted that his committee will be looking for direction from the Chairman and Freeholders regarding what his committee's next steps will be in early 2021.

Resilience and Sustainability: The committee did not meet.

Public Policy: Ms. Perantoni asked Ms. Kratina to reach out to Mr. DeFeo for a summary of energy-related bill proposals that are currently being considered by the State legislature for distribution to the group.

Public Comment: No members of the public were present.

Upcoming Meetings and Events: Mr. Lane reminded Council members who are up for re-appointment in January to submit their resumes through the County Portal. The next meeting is January 19, 2021. Chairman Amann mentioned a recent Rutgers climate institute webinar he participated in that included a few panel speakers from the NJDEP who spoke about the Global Warming Response Act - "80x50" report. Data on metric tons of carbon from residential and non-residential sources was presented, information about how the transition to electric vehicles will affect electric generation requirements, and other useful information was presented. The webinar was recorded and information on how to view it online will be passed along to the members. Ms. Perantoni commented about the upcoming Electric Vehicle Webinar by RideWise this week. Mr. Lane noted that he is facilitating one of the community break-out sessions for this event. Ms. Perantoni talked about the major contribution to GHG emissions made by the transportation sector and how EVs can be a game-changer in this regard. She mentioned the need for potential changes to the electric rate structure to align EV charging activities with periods when renewable energy generation is high and rates may be lower, which should be part of future discussions. Mr. Lane noted that Pam Frank from ChargeEVc was a guest speaker at a recent NJ County Planners Association Meeting, and there is a follow-up meeting scheduled for tomorrow with Eve Gable-Frank also from ChargeEVc to discuss what counties can do to advance EV implementation. Mr. Lane also reported a very high probability that the County will be awarded a grant from the NJTPA for its next sub-regional study comprised of an update of the circulation element of the County Master Plan, which includes an expanded EV Readiness Plan Element that will incorporate more detail and set the stage for identifying strategies for electrifying the transportation system network consistent with the State Energy Master Plan. That project would start July 1, 2021, and one or two representatives from the Council will be asked to serve on the project steering committee.

Chairman Amann mentioned the work of Susan Dorward, a former member of the Council involving an initiative to promote the use of low-carbon concrete. Concrete is a big carbon-contributor and is the most pervasive construction material. A company in Piscataway, NJ has formulated a concrete product with a significantly reduced carbon footprint. There is also a draft bill and sponsor for this that is under consideration by the state legislature. A similar bill is proceeding in New York State. Firms that submit bids on projects that use the new concrete would get a price adjustment to account for the carbon savings. The new product is poured wet and can be used for sidewalks, foundations, etc. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

Mr. Lane mentioned the plug he gave for the Council's Home Energy Self-Assessment Tool at last month's SCBP Sustainable Somerset Committee meeting. A link to the document was distributed to the committee members following the meeting.

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was submitted by Mr. Lane and seconded by Mr. Drake at 7:45 pm and all were in favor.