

# Minutes of the Somerset County Energy Council Meeting

## Tuesday, January 30, 2024 (Held Via Zoom)

### Call to Order

Mr. DeFeo called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

### Pledge of Allegiance

### Oath of Office

Wayne DeFeo and Susan Dorward were sworn in as members of the Somerset Energy Council.

### Election of Officers

Mr. Amann proposed to reelect Mr. DeFeo and Mrs. Perantoni to their positions of Secretary and Vice Chair, respectively. Mr. Knox provided the nomination for Mrs. Perantoni and Mr. Dvorin gave the nomination for Mr. DeFeo. Both nominations were seconded and approved by a voice vote.

### Roll Call

Mr. Lane conducted the roll call, and the following members were present:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Present Yes/No</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Present (Yes/No)</b>
William Amann, PE, LEED Fellow, DCEP Chair	Yes	Walter C. Lane, PP, AICP	Yes
Jeanne Perantoni, AIA, LEED AP	Yes	John McLaughlin	No
Wayne DeFeo, LEED AP-	Yes	Rakesh Parikh	Yes
David Dvorin	Yes	Jim Price	No
William T. Knox, JD, CFA	Yes	<i>Paul Drake, Commissioner Liaison</i>	Yes
Susan Dorward	Yes	<i>Melonie Marano, Commissioner Alternate</i>	No

### November 21, 2023 Meeting Minutes

There were no comments on meeting minutes. Mr. Amann made a motion to approve the November 21, 2023, meeting minutes which was seconded by Mr. DeFeo. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

## **Chairman's Comments**

Mr. Amann started his comments by talking about the bylaws for the Somerset County Energy Council and not voting on matters where a member may have a conflict of interest. Mr. Amann mentioned the Somerset County Business Partnership (Sustainable Somerset Meeting) where the BPU Commissioner Dr. Zenon Christodoulou spoke, and Mr. Amann stated he was impressed. Mr. Amann also informed the Council about a conference he went to called the Mid Atlantic Solar Storage Industries Association on modernizing the grid, which he found to be incredible. Three noteworthy speakers were Ed Gray from PSE&G, Paul Heightman from NJBPU, and Dr. Richard Perez from The State University of New York.

## **Commissioner's Comments**

Commissioner Drake stated was excited to start the new year. He also stated that we could potentially add some projects to the New Business List.

## **Old Business**

### **Climate Change Policy Statement and Sustainable Facilities Policy**

Mr. Amann informed us that NJ received \$10.0 million from the Federal DEP for Electric Vehicle charging for multifamily developments. NJ was also awarded 3.7 megawatts of offshore wind approvals. Pennsylvania was awarded 38 megawatts of on shore wind.

Ms. Dorward mentioned hydrogen fuel cells to the group as a potential project. This led to Mr. Amann asking Mr. Lane about the County's Alternative Fueling Policies and if there are any updates upcoming. The topic of sidewalks and the County's sidewalk policy was discussed at length. The majority of the members of the Council spoke on this matter, with there being an emphasis on filling in gaps.

Lastly, Mr. Amann congratulated Ms. Dorward on helping singlehandedly to create the first Low Carbon Concrete bill in the United States for New Jersey.

### **Inflation Reduction Act Working Group**

Ms. Perantoni said that Sustainable Jersey and Princeton have some infographics out on the matter. Mr. Dvorin said he didn't have anything to share given that he and Mr. Price have not been able to get together lately. Mr. Dvorin did mention though, that he was giving a talk on the IRA at the Warren Library on March 5<sup>th</sup>, specifically about the tax credits regarding EV vehicle purchases.

## Somerset County Circulation Plan Update

Mr. Lane reported that the draft Somerset County Circulation Plan is currently being reviewed by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA). The public hearing process to adopt the plan will occur early next year.

Mr. Lane during this time also mentioned that the County submitted a letter of intent for federal funding to reduce GHG emissions. Ms. Dorward asked Mr. Lane if geothermal projects would fall under this money, and he replied that yes it would fall into this category.

## **New Business**

### Committee Assignments

Mr. Amann stated that he was not making any changes to the current committee assignments. Ms. Dorward was added to the Greening Economy Committee and Public Policy Committee.

### Discussion: Clean Energy Training Opportunities at Somerset County Vo Tech High School

In connection with the Greening Economy, Mr. Amann stated that the next meeting of the business partnership sustainability committee is at the Vo Tech. There will be a revamped discussion on clean energy training opportunities (February 13).

### Department of Energy's Community Energy Fellow Program

The County is currently working on the Grant Application. More information to come.

### Discussion: Energy Benchmarking Requirements

The State of NJ enacted legislation requiring all buildings over 25,000 square feet must establish an Energy Benchmark. Mr. Lane is unsure where County Engineering is on this matter but said he believes that progress is being made.

### 2024 Meeting Dates

The location and format of the remaining 2024 meetings of the Energy Council was discussed at length. The Council decided that at least one meeting a year should be in person, perhaps the May meeting. For now, the rest of the meetings will be virtual, subject to change. Meeting to allow for hybrid meetings has been purchased.

## **Committee Chair Reports**

### Energy Efficiency

No report provided.

### Renewable Energy

Mr. Dvorin stated the NJ Board OF Public Utilities (BPU) has an Energy Plan Grants Program and wants to educate local municipalities on this information and potentially begin to reach out to municipalities sustainability officers or Sustainable Jersey. Mr. Dvorin shared with everyone information regarding Alternative Fueling Credits. Additionally, there is a community solar company called Solar Landscape who offers training at no cost. Mr. Dvorin wants to connect them with the Vo Tech or RVCC. Lastly, Mr. Dvorin proposed that the Committee should propose/promote a net zero policy by XXXX. Commissioner Drake and a majority of the Council supported investigating a net zero policy.

### Energy Education and Awareness

Ms. Perantoni stated that the American Climate Core has money that they are trying to figure out how to divide up, with two relevant categories being workforce development as well as education regarding environmental justice. There is a potential connection to be made here between RVCC or the Vo Tech and American Climate Core.

### Public Policy

Mr. DeFeo said that the legislative session has ended and started. At the end of session, the governor signed 47 bills, a few of which are energy related, with one example of a passed bill allowing farms to sell firewood.

### Greening Economy

No report given.

### Public Comment

There were no public comments.

### Upcoming Meetings/Events

No upcoming meetings were discussed.

### Adjournment/Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the SCEC is Tuesday, March 19, 2024 and will be held via Zoom.

