

Property & Public Lands Committee Meeting

August 23, 2024

City Hall, Auditorium

Time Commenced: 10:00 am

Time Ended: 11:00 am

Attending: Councilor Michael V. Frett (Chair), Councilor Dani Obery

The Committee met for the purpose of reviewing a proposal from Perennial Renewables, in response to the City's RFP for a Municipal Solar Photovoltaic Project, to be installed at the site for the City's new Department of Public Works building. Records show, that a proposal submitted by Revision Energy, was deemed to be valid, only for 30-days from the time of its submission. As that time has passed, the Committee was not asked to review its proposal. Committee members had previously received, and reviewed, copies of Perennial's proposal. The proposal was discussed and what follows are the Committee's observations and conclusions.

The company and its partners possess a commendable background, and experience, with the design and construction of solar installations. A Hallowell-based business, it presents the City with a lease agreement opportunity, which will give rise to an influx of revenue. Furthermore, the company asserts that its installation will provide 100% of the "City's" electricity needs, which the Committee takes as referring to our municipal operations. In addition, the proposal would also "prioritize Hallowell residents and businesses to subscribe to the array."

Collectively, the Committee was impressed that this proposal would move our communities forward, towards a goal of "using 100% renewable energy for *municipal operations* by 2040 and *reducing emissions* citywide 80% by 2050." Emphasis Added. (SEE: City Council Resolution 01-19R)

In an unanticipated occurrence, the Committee received insight into two concerns that emerged during its meeting. First, Nick Lacasse, one of the company's partners, ensured that there is no PFAS in the solar panels the company installs. Second, he confirmed that, despite what appeared to be a contradiction, on the bottom of p.28 of the proposal, i.e., that the City's Federal Investment Tax Credit (\$40,500) "can be taken in the form of a federal *tax credit*," the City would receive a *cash* payment from the IRS, as stated on p.27 of the proposal. Emphasis Added. The Committee's concerns were alleviated by both responses

Finally, the Committee was asked to comment on any objections it might have to the report, submitted for acceptance, from the former Solar Task Force Committee. While that report is largely consistent with the findings and recommendation of this Committee, there is one major point of divergence. In the second sentence of its point #2, the report incorrectly states that the proposal "helps to meet the city's goal of *transitioning at least 80% of Hallowell's energy use to renewable sources as called for in the Resolution 01-19-R.*" Emphasis Added. In the Committee's opinion, the report's reference to "Hallowell's energy use," seems to suggest the entire City, which is inconsistent with the resolution. Resolution 01-19-R states: "...goals to move our communities forward, including *using 100% renewable energy for municipal operations* by 2040 and *reducing emissions citywide 80% by 2050;*" The distinction between what's stated in the report and the actual contents of Resolution 01-19-R is important because, had the council accepted and endorsed the

report, as presented, it would have, at best, created a confusion around the interpretation and import of Resolution 01-19-R.

In conclusion: Based on the several positive observations contained in the foregoing report, and the welcomed opportunity to actually move in an energy responsible direction, which is consistent with the values of our City, the Committee recommends that the Council consider accepting the proposal from Perennial Renewables. The Committee further acknowledges that, as it has a limited background knowledge of solar installations, the Council might wish to consider an independent follow-up review on this matter, prior to acting on this recommendation.

Respectfully submitted
Michael V. Frett, Chair