

Go Green Illinois Meeting Minutes

Topic: Solar Opportunities for Communities and Residents

January 14, 2020

Next Meeting: March 10, 2020

Topic: Transportation

Solar Opportunities

1. **Municipal Solar Initiatives - Rob Sabo (City of Highland Park) & Mark Pruitt (The Power Bureau)**

Overview

Joint Purchasing involves:

- Economies of scale
- Operational efficiency
- Complexity of energy procurement

Municipalities don't pay tax, so cannot claim the federal tax credit. They don't pay for electricity for non revenue generating buildings. Through the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus, Mark Pruitt has analyzed electricity bills for municipal accounts to see who can benefit from the community solar program.

Types

A. Behind the Meter for Municipalities through a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA)

Approach: Lake County conducted joint request for proposals for companies that would install solar on municipal buildings and sell the energy back to the municipality for a fixed price. There would be a cost savings over ComEd.

- Current: Finalized terms and agreements for behind the meter provided in November 2019
 - Facing smaller tax credit– was 30% in 2019, will be 26% in 2020

B. Community Solar for Municipalities (C2S2)

This program would enroll municipal accounts in community solar subscriptions. Metropolitan Mayors Caucus CD2 conducted joint procurement of community solar for municipal accounts. Municipalities don't pay tax, so cannot claim the federal tax credit. They don't pay for electricity for non revenue generating buildings, so this only applies to facilities that generate revenue (water plant, for example) and other accounts like street lights and pump stations. Through the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus, Mark Pruitt has analyzed electricity bills for municipal accounts to see who can benefit from joining the community solar program. If your municipality is not yet participating, there will be additional opportunities to join. Please make sure your municipality is aware of this program and encourage them to contact MMC to learn more. There is information on this program at: <https://www.gogreenillinois.org/community-solar-clearinghouse-solutions/>.

- 1st community solar project is in Elgin
- 25 municipalities throughout IL are participating
- Participating municipalities pay a lower electricity rate

C. RECS for residents

- The North Shore Municipal Aggregation Consortium (includes 8 communities) is working to negotiate a price for energy with 100% RECS for its residents
- Provides a 10% savings off ComEd supply rate
- Can terminate at any time

2. Community Solar - Jon Carson (Trajectory Energy Partners)

- All possible through the Future Energy Jobs Act – Illinois Shines
- 3 Types of Solar
 - Behind the meter
 - Utility scale solar
 - Community solar – meant for homes, buildings, and other entities that cannot put solar on the roofs, including condos and apartments. People can subscribe to purchase their energy supply from a community solar project and will get a credit on their utility bill for that energy. This enables people to purchase solar energy and often saves money off the ComEd price.
- What to do?
 - Build a community solar campaign for your Go Green Chapter – choose from any community solar program – or go with the program that Go Green Wilmette is recommending through Clearway. (Clearway has 18 projects.) GGW is recommending participation in a project to be built in Orangeville, Illinois in Stevenson County, based on the recommendation of Trajectory Energy.
 - Host a community solar event in our town or in your home.
 - Trajectory Energy Partners is hiring part-time staff and hosting summer internships for work in the North Shore

3. Leasing and Alternative Funding – Dave Wilms (Advance Renewables)

- Because non profit organizations do not pay taxes, purchase of solar doesn't work financially. However, there are alternative ways to fund solar projects. Many require a partner who can take advantage of the tax benefits that non-profits cannot use. Houses of Worship, for example, can recruit a congregation member to buy the system, take the tax credits and then donate the system back.

4. CEJA Update – Jay Futterman

It is imperative that this bill get passed! It not only helps Illinois increase use of renewable energy, but also helps protect residents from rate increases to prop up coal (see: <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/19122019/ferc-pjm-grid-coal-subsidy-ruling-renewable-energy-nuclear-illinois-pennsylvania-climate-change>).

- Goal is to be carbon-free by 2050
 - Establish EV infrastructure
 - Overall lower electricity costs
 - Needs to be passed by May 2020 to protect residents from rate increases (see above link)
- How to get involved:

- Call legislators – script can be found at: <https://www.gogreenillinois.org/action-alert-clean-energy-jobs-act/>

International Energy Conservation Code update

Thanks to everyone who encouraged their municipality to vote on the IECC update. Most of the recommendations were approved thanks to participation by municipalities, so the new energy code will increase energy efficiency of new construction and include some EV readiness features. For a summary of the changes, go to: <https://energyefficientcodes.org/>.

5. Electrifying Public Transit System – Kim Stone

- Pace, the suburban transit agency, is building a new bus garage in Lake County. They plan to install a compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling station. If they do that and transition the north bus fleet to CNG, we will be locked in to fossil fuel use for a minimum of 15 years. Kim met with a member of the Pace Board from Lake County and told her about electric buses. She encouraged Pace to skip CNG and go straight to electric. There are grants available and it would save Pace money in the long term with lower operating and maintenance costs.

Community Sharing

Vernon Hills:

- Composting

River Woods:

- Community garden approved with deer fence
- Updating *Living with Nature* from 2017

Wilmette:

- Repair Café on February 8th – need fixers
- Going Green Matters on March 8th
- One Earth Film Festival (<https://www.oneearthfilmfest.org/>)
- Bird-friendly glass – in review process

Skokie

- Library under renovation – meeting space is changed
- Developing a website

Winnetka

- Go Green Reads Book group – “Arctic Dreams” on Monday, January 27th
- 2040 Comprehensive Plan for Village in process

Deerfield

- Waste – working on getting food scrap pick up
- Tree challenge
- Monarch challenge
- 2 river cleanup days scheduled
- Educational program for solar

Elmhurst

- One Earth Film Festival (<https://www.oneearthfilmfest.org/>)
- Solar sale last year, solar m
- Pesticide activism – like Oak Park
- Resolving issues for recycling and contamination problem
- Striving for net zero for their two new schools

Citizens Greener Evanston

- Working with historic Preservation group for solar permits
- EcoHub website – sync calendars – all Go Green groups invited to use it

- Leave the leaves campaign

Evanston Environmental Association

- Breakfast with the Board – 23 people attended
- Wild and Scenic Film Festival – <https://evanstonenvironment.org/filmfest>

Glencoe

- CS squared program (see above info on Community Solar Clearinghouse Solutions)
- In-depth community survey – 20% response with 80% support re: their environmental efforts
- Grant for “Connect Glencoe” – hiking and biking trail alongside tracks
- Pushing for cultural heritage

Glenview

- CS squared program (see above info on Community Solar Clearinghouse Solutions)

Highland Park

- Plastic bag challenge – inter-store challenge (looking for other Go Green groups to participate - contact gghpinfo@gmail.com)
- Coordinating communications with GGIL topics
- Updating Bike-Walk 2030 Plan
- Fire station – net-zero is being considered
- 50th celebration of Earth Day

Lake Bluff

- Long range plan for Board
- EV charging stations at train station within next year
- Bike repair station downtown
- Grocery store gives money for bringing their own bag
- Focus on flood water

Lake Forest

- Screening – “Last Man Fishing”
- Anti-idling policy

Libertyville

- Commercial food composting at 3 restaurants
- Pumpkin recycling
- Native garden at City Hall
- Electrical aggregation 100% REC option
- Green Drinks – composting
- One Earth Film Festival

Northfield

- Sustainability section in long range plan

Northbrook

- Presentation on forest preserves
- Planting 100 trees
- Book discussion - climate of hope