

City Council Workshop

Agenda Item #3

May 8, 2017

Solar-related Legislative Bills and  
Community Climate Action Plan Update

The City's Sustainability Coordinator, Julie Rosenbach, has requested a workshop with the City Council to discuss passing a resolve in support of legislative solar energy reforms, along with an update on the Community Climate Action Plan process.

As outlined in further detail in Ms. Rosenbach's first memo (attached), the proposed resolve would support two bills currently before the legislature. These bills would establish a new program to promote large commercial and community-scale solar projects, using a competitive, market-based approach. This would apply to municipalities such as South Portland as well.

I am recommending support of the proposed resolve, which would appear on your May 15 agenda. As Ms. Rosenbach is unable to attend that meeting, our hope is that all of Council's questions will be able to be addressed at this workshop.

In addition, Ms. Rosenbach will provide Council with an update on her department's plan to develop a new, Community-wide Climate Action Plan, which would include both residential and commercial sectors. Please see attached documents for more details. Your feedback is welcomed and Ms. Rosenbach will be present to further discuss and answer any questions from Council.



City Manager



*SUSTAINABILITY  
OFFICE*

JULIE A. ROSENBACH  
Sustainability Coordinator

To: Scott Morelli, City Manager; Patti Smith, Mayor; and City Council  
From: Julie Rosenbach, Sustainability Coordinator  
CC: Josh Reny, Assistant City Manager; Greg L'Heureux, Director of Finance; Tex Haeuser, Director of Planning & Development; Jessica Williams, Chair of the Energy & Recycling Committee  
Date: May 8, 2017  
**Subject: Proposed Resolve in Support of Legislative Solar Energy Reforms**

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The reason for bringing forward this Resolve is to ask the Council to express the City's support for revising and improving Maine's laws and regulations governing solar distributed generation.<sup>1</sup>

Locally generated solar power can lower electricity costs, reduce demand on the transmission grid, and improve the resiliency of the system. However, outdated provisions in Maine's distributed generation laws such as allowing power from only nine meters to be offset by a solar array and restricting system size to 660 kW create artificial hurdles to developing solar in ways that maximize its potential and lower the cost. Maine's regulatory framework for distributed generation dates to 1998 and has only undergone limited revisions. In contrast, cost effective options for local small and medium scale power generation like solar have changed dramatically in 28 years.

As most members may recall, the City Council passed a resolve last year ([RESOLVE #7-15/16](#)) in support of the stakeholder process convened by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and subsequent comprehensive solar bill (LD 1649), which won broad bipartisan support in both the House and Senate but fell short of enactment. This legislation would have created a wide-ranging framework for, and removed the barriers to distributed generation solar projects in Maine. In the absence of this legislative reform, the PUC took up a mandatory review of net metering and voted to phase it out despite the absence of any new policy to support distributed generation.

This Resolve supports revisions to solar policy that would: a) override the negative PUC order (which will go into effect in 2018), b) move Maine's solar market beyond its currently limited system, and c) allow municipalities to maximize the options for developing solar arrays. Namely, the Resolve supports two bills currently before the Legislature: LD 1444 "An Act Regarding Large-scale Community Solar Procurement" and, albeit to a lesser extent, LD 1504 "An Act Regarding Solar Power for Farms and Businesses." These bills propose the establishment of a new program to promote large commercial (including municipal) and community-scale solar projects using a competitive, market-based approach.



***SUSTAINABILITY  
OFFICE***

JULIE A. ROSENBACH  
Sustainability Coordinator

South Portland has historically been active in helping to shape policy at the state level in order to improve the efficiency, sustainability, and cost effectiveness of municipal energy infrastructure. This is a continuation of that process. South Portland is collaborating with several other municipalities including Scarborough, Rockland, Falmouth, and Portland who are also pursuing similar support from their Councils to demonstrate to state decision-makers the serious commitment Maine municipalities have in promoting distributed solar energy as part of their energy portfolios.

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<sup>i</sup> *Distributed generation means electricity generated to offset the power used at a site where a generation source is located (i.e. solar panels on the roof of a home), or located in the general area where the power is used (i.e. a solar array located on a city's capped landfill generating electricity to offset the power used at municipal buildings).*



CITY OF SOUTH PORTLAND

PATRICIA A. SMITH  
Mayor

SCOTT T. MORELLI  
City Manager

EMILY F. SCULLY  
City Clerk

SALLY J. DAGGETT  
Jensen Baird Gardner & Henry

**IN CITY COUNCIL  
RESOLVE # 16/17**

District One  
CLAUDE V. Z. MORGAN

**WHEREAS**, by most measures Maine has the lowest amount of installed solar electrical power generation of any state in New England; and

District Two  
PATRICIA A. SMITH

**WHEREAS**, solar technology has evolved rapidly into a competitive energy resource that provides jobs and economic benefits, while contributing to energy independence; and

District Three  
EBEN C. ROSE

**WHEREAS**, solar power as a clean, scalable, distributed resource available almost everywhere offers clear advantages over traditional, imported fuel sources; and

District Four  
LINDA C. COHEN

**WHEREAS**, advances in technology and declines in installed system prices make solar a viable option for many businesses, municipalities, and residents; and

District Five  
BRAD FOX

**WHEREAS**, the ability of a municipality to offer locally generated power at stable, long-term rates is an important tool for supporting sustainable community and economic development; and

At Large  
MAXINE R. BEECHER

**WHEREAS**, generating power at or near the location where the power is used can be a cost effective option both to minimize stress on the transmission grid and to minimize the cost to all ratepayers of grid expansion projects; and

At Large  
SUSAN J. HENDERSON

**WHEREAS**, Maine's current regulations governing distributed power generation, which limit system size and the number of meters that can subscribe to power from a local source, create significant barriers to developing cost-effective projects in Maine communities; and

**WHEREAS**, there are over 1,800 acres of closed and capped municipal landfills in Maine for which there are few, if any, common reuse or redevelopment options; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has determined that developing solar power projects on capped landfills and other brownfield sites represents the best reuse option for many of these sites; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2015 and 2016 many parties participated in a stakeholder process at the Public Utilities Commission and subsequent legislative process in support of statutory changes that would have created a framework for, and removed barriers to, community distributed generation projects; and

**WHEREAS**, last year a comprehensive and collaboratively supported solar bill (LD 1649) won broad bipartisan support in both the House and Senate but fell short of enactment, after which the Maine Public Utilities Commission voted to phase out net metering even in the absence of any new policy; and

**WHEREAS**, two bills currently before Legislature (LD 1444 "An Act Regarding Large-scale Community Solar Procurement" and, albeit to a lesser extent, LD 1504 "An Act Regarding Solar Power for Farms and Businesses") include and expand on options for municipally-hosted solar distributed generation projects contained in the 2016 legislation; and

**WHEREAS**, provisions of these bills, if enacted, would remove many of the barriers and hurdles municipalities have identified to maximize opportunities for cost effective solar distributed generation projects;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the City of South Portland City Council supports the types of reforms to solar policy proposed in LD 1444 ("An Act Regarding Large-scale Community Solar Procurement") and, albeit to a lesser extent, LD 1504 ("An Act Regarding Solar Power for Farms and Businesses") that enable the development of cost-effective municipal, small business, and community solar projects in Maine and urges the First Regular Session of the 128<sup>th</sup> Maine Legislature to adopt these changes.

**Sealed with the Seal of the City of South Portland, Maine, on this Fifteenth Day of May in the Year Two Thousand and Seventeen.**

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Patricia A. Smith, Mayor



*SUSTAINABILITY  
OFFICE*

JULIE A. ROSENBACH  
Sustainability Coordinator

To: Scott Morelli, City Manager and City Council  
From: Julie Rosenbach, Sustainability Coordinator  
CC: Jessica Williams, Chair of the Energy & Recycling Committee  
Date: May 8, 2017  
**Subject: Development Plan for Community Climate Action Plan**

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In January 2017, the Sustainability Office and the Energy & Recycling Committee gave a presentation to the Council about the City's progress in implementing our Municipal Climate Action Plan and reaching our municipal climate action goal of 17% reduction by 2017.

With the successful completion of these two objectives, staff recommended moving forward with the development of a new Community-wide Climate Action Plan to include residential and commercial/industrial sectors. This workshop is to inform you about how we intend to develop this plan.

Attached you will find a one page overview and timeline. At the workshop, we will go into more detail about the tools we will use to engage as many community members and groups as possible in this process.



# Community Climate Action Plan

South Portland is developing a Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP) and we want to engage individuals, community groups, and local businesses in the planning process.

The Plan will build on the success of municipal climate actions and set a new Citywide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction goal. Over the next 18 months, the City's Sustainability Office will be collecting data to compile a GHG emissions inventory broken out by municipal, residential and commercial/industrial sector emissions.

The Sustainability Office will also be developing goals, strategies, and actions to reduce GHG emissions and support a community-wide transition to more efficient and renewable energy. Because it has become increasingly clear that South Portland must simultaneously prepare for the unavoidable impacts of climate change, our CCAP will also include actions for resiliency and adaptation.

## What do we want to achieve?

- ◇ Reduce greenhouse gas emissions community-wide.
- ◇ Transition to cleaner, more sustainable energy.
- ◇ Increase recycling and reduce waste.
- ◇ Prepare South Portland for the potential impacts of climate change.
- ◇ Build community engagement and support around climate action efforts.

## How will we achieve these goals?

The CCAP will outline actions in four key areas across municipal, residential, and commercial/industrial sectors:

1. Higher Performing Buildings
2. Sustainable Transportation
3. Waste Reduction
4. Climate Preparedness

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You can get involved by attending one of the workshops, meetings, and community forums we will be holding to solicit your input. Contact Julie Rosenbach at [rosenbach@southportland.org](mailto:rosenbach@southportland.org) or 347-4148 for more information.

COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (CCAP) -- DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

| TASKS                                                                                                               | 2017 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     | 2018 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|--|
|                                                                                                                     | JAN  | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEPT | OCT | NOV | DEC | JAN  | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEPT |  |
| Review other CAPs & resources                                                                                       | █    | █   | █   | █   |     |     | █   | █   |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     | █   | █   |     |      |  |
| Create plan for developing a Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP)                                                   | █    | █   | █   | █   |     |     | █   | █   |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   |      |  |
| Present plan to City Council                                                                                        |      |     |     |     | █   |     | █   | █   |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   |      |  |
| Develop scope of work & hire consultant to conduct a community GHG emissions inventory                              |      |     |     | █   | █   |     | █   | █   |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   |      |  |
| Complete community GHG emissions inventory                                                                          |      |     |     |     | █   | █   | █   | █   |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   |      |  |
| ERC -- review and get input on action items & stakeholders to meet with                                             |      |     |     |     | █   |     | █   | █   |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   |      |  |
| Dept. Heads -- review and get input on action items & stakeholders to meet with                                     |      |     |     |     | █   |     | █   | █   |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   |      |  |
| Conduct specific stakeholder meetings                                                                               |      |     |     |     |     | █   | █   | █   | █    | █   | █   |     |      |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   |      |  |
| ERC-- review GHG inventory/completed list of action items; get feedback and recommendations re: priorities          |      |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   | █    |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   |      |  |
| Community forums -- review GHG inventory/completed list of action items & get feedback                              |      |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   | █    |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   |      |  |
| Dept. Heads -- review GHG inventory/completed list of action items; get feedback and recommendations re: priorities |      |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   | █    |     |     |     | █    |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   |      |  |
| Final Review Team -- review and choose priority actions for CCAP                                                    |      |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   | █    |     |     |     | █    |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   |      |  |
| Finalize CCAP                                                                                                       |      |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   | █    |     |     |     | █    | █   | █   | █   |     |     | █   | █   |      |  |
| Final Review Team -- review final CCAP                                                                              |      |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   | █    |     |     |     |      |     |     |     | █   |     | █   | █   |      |  |
| Present to Council for approval                                                                                     |      |     |     |     |     |     | █   | █   | █    |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     | █   | █   |     |      |  |