

**MINUTES OF  
CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL  
March 11, 2025**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Bob Barkanic, CAC Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 12:33 PM.

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL (CAC) MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Robert Barkanic, Chairperson	John St. Clair
Trisha Salvia, Vice-Chairperson	Jerome Shabazz
George Ambrose	John Walliser
Jacqueline Bonomo	Jim Welty
William Fink	Tim Weston
Jason Foster	Thad Stevens
Katherine Heatherington	Carol Collier
Duane Mowery	

**DEP STAFF PRESENT:**

Ian Irvin, Executive Director  
Casey Damicantonio, Policy Office  
Joshua Neyhart, Policy Office

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

Chairman Barkanic solicited additions or corrections to the February 11, 2025, Minutes. Hearing none,

**Tim Weston motioned to approve the Minutes of the February 11, 2025, meeting. Jerome Shabazz seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.**

**DEP UPDATE:**

David Althoff, Director of the Energy Programs Office at DEP, was present to give the DEP update, focusing on the Lightning Plan, which is the latest legislative push from Governor Shapiro. The Lightning Plan is built on a plan the Governor unveiled last year, PACER (Pennsylvania Climate Emissions Reduction Act) and PRESS (Pennsylvania Reliable Energy Sustainability Standard). The plan has a few goals in mind, which include lowering consumer costs, creating good paying jobs, and reducing emissions from energy generation.

The plan involves six pieces:

1. RESET (Reliable Energy Sighting & Electric Transmission) Board – a single interagency board to consider and approve applications for large reliable energy generating facilities.

2. EDGE (Economic Development for a Growing Economy) tax credit modification – originally passed in 2022, the Governor is looking into expanding the credit to clean hydrogen projects.
3. Act 129 of 2008 – requirement for electric companies to reduce energy consumption and peak demand, originally passed in the mid-00s, and so the Governor is looking to modernize the act.
4. Community Energy – enables and creates a new bill crediting system for solar, geothermal, renewable natural gas, battery based community energy facilities.
5. PACER – a Pennsylvania only carbon limit and investing auction process which allows the state to control what the budget would look like, what the underpinnings of emissions reduction would look like in the electricity sector.
6. PRESS – reworked portfolio standard would include three tiers, number of different new technologies to be included, geothermal, small modular reactors, fusion technology, clean natural gas technology.

Q&A included how waste coal would be treated, to which Mr. Althoff responded that they would have to investigate those potential allocations with the legislature, and to what extent this plan relies on the federal government, to which Mr. Althoff responded that there is no part of the six items that relies on federal funding or any federal decisions.

#### **CAC COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

##### **Strategic Issues Committee**

Did not meet.

##### **Policy and Regulatory Oversight**

Did not meet.

##### **Aggregate Advisory Board**

Met on February 24<sup>th</sup>, looking to consolidate TGDs.

#### **PRESENTATION:**

##### **Morgan Boyd, Special Assistant to the Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development**

This presentation was on updates regarding Executive Order 2024-03, which Governor Shapiro signed in September 2024. The Executive Order tasked the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) with leading the development of a Housing Action Plan to address Pennsylvania's housing shortage, address homelessness, and expand affordable housing options.

DCED has made some accomplishments on the housing front, including investing \$500 million into commercial and industrial site readiness, launching the Main Street Matters program and BusinessPA, and securing over \$3 billion in private sector investments. The administration has also increased PHARE funding, increased the Neighborhood Assistance Program tax credits, and increased Homelessness Assistance Program funding.

Looking toward the 2025-2026 budget, the administration is looking to try to invest \$50 million for housing stock restoration, \$10 million for first time homebuyers, and continuing the PHARE increase to \$110 million while also staffing the state planning board, sealing eviction records, and creating an interagency council on homelessness.

Q&A included whether they have had discussions regarding sewage facilities planning, to which Mr. Boyd responded that the issue has come up in their engagement with communities and it is something they are planning to work with municipalities on that issue.

### **Sharon Pillar, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Solar Center**

This presentation gave an overview of the work done by the Pennsylvania Solar Center, a nonprofit organization that focuses on helping businesses navigate the solar energy procurement process. Their GET (Galvanizing our Energy Transition through) Solar initiative instills organizations with confidence during the process of going solar by using resources that connect them to professionals, making the process simple.

Ms. Pillar also went into the details of the Solar for Schools Grant Program. The program has resulted in 88 grant applications from 25 counties in urban, rural, and suburban areas that requested a total of over \$88 million – more than triple the amount of available funding. Other programs that Pennsylvania Solar Center point organizations toward is the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which offers a 30% base tax credit, and the Act 129 Solar Rebate, which offers a one time payment based on estimated one-year production.

The final section of the presentation was focused on electronics recycling, to which Sharon highlighted the work of an organization called Sycamore that processes 20 million pounds monthly. The process is 100% carbon-neutral thanks to solar energy, and they even recycle solar panels themselves to give them a second life.

Q&A included whether the organization would support the idea of a bill that would help warehouses put solar panels on their roofs, to which Sharon said that they would support that idea because warehouses take up a lot of real estate and it would be a good opportunity to place solar panels. She also addressed a question regarding what they charge schools for their services, to which the response was that they do not charge anything or very little to schools that are in low-income districts.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

### **Emily Little, Solar Access and Affordability, Heartland Region**

Emily was not on the call, but she submitted written comments regarding Solar for All, which she says is a federally funded program designed to install solar panels for income-limited households across the nation. She calls for support for PA House Bill 362, which she says would allow federal Solar for All funding to be dispersed to Pennsylvania families, leading to millions in household savings on electric bills.

## **NEW BUSINESS/OPEN DISCUSSION**

Looking for CAC members to fill two seats on the Aggregate Advisory Board and one seat on the Mining Reclamation Advisory Board. Reach out to Ian or Bob if interested.

Carol Collier was officially nominated to the Legislative Committee and the Strategic Issues Committee.

Ian sent out the 2024 Annual Report and he is hoping to finalize the report at the next CAC meeting.

CAC wrote a letter to the DEP Secretary regarding issues brought up by Green Forest Works, the draft of the letter is available for members to review.

CAC is also drafting two letters of support for HB 289 and HB 448.

## **ADJOURNMENT:**

**The March 11, 2025, meeting of the CAC was adjourned at 2:55pm.**