



Executive Department  
Jon P. Jennings, City Manager

To: Councilor Thibodeau and Members of the Sustainability and Transportation Committee  
From: Troy Moon, Sustainability Coordinator  
Re: Energy Benchmarking and Disclosure Discussion  
Date: October 19, 2018

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During the committee meeting held on September 19, 2018 your committee reviewed a proposed amendment to the City's Energy Benchmarking and Disclosure Ordinance. As currently written, the ordinance requires the owners of all buildings with 20,000 square feet or more of floor space to document the amount of energy and water they use in each of their buildings and report it to the City in December, 2018. As described in the back up memo for that meeting, property owners have found it to be difficult to gather this information, especially for electricity.. In response to this concern, staff recommended that the reporting deadline be postponed and aligned with the deadline established for the City to disclose this information on our website. As written, the disclosure deadline is not firmly established. Instead, it set the date for one year after the Sustainability Office certifies that energy data is available to property owners in a convenient electronic format. As the committee members discussed the proposed amendment they felt they needed information from Central Maine Power about how the existing data platform works and wanted the opportunity to discuss with company representatives how property owners could receive information about the amount of electricity used in their buildings in a more straightforward and convenient manner. In response to this request, Councilor Thibodeau and Mayor Strimling drafted a letter to President Herling requesting that he or representatives from the company attend the meeting scheduled for October 24. Mayor Strimling also invited Maine Public Advocate, Barry Hobbins, to attend the meeting while staff reached out to representatives from Efficiency Maine.

As back up material for this meeting I have included the letter to CMP, the text of the proposed ordinance amendment, and the back up memo describing staff's rationale for proposing the changes.

An effective energy benchmarking and disclosure ordinance serves as a foundation for efforts to achieve widespread energy efficiency in the building sector. The information derived helps building owners make decisions about energy investments, helps prospective tenants make informed decisions before leasing property, and helps municipalities and others target outreach about efficiency programs to property owners who need it the most. Right now twenty five cities across the country have benchmarking and disclosure ordinances that affect private property. These include Boston, Cambridge, Seattle, Chicago, Austin, and South Portland. These programs have had a noticeable impact on greenhouse gas emissions. According to the New York City Energy and Water Use Report in 2017,

*Between 2010 and 2015, regularly benchmarked buildings cut their energy use by more than 10 percent and their total greenhouse gas emissions by almost 14 percent*

The City of Boston, recognized by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) as the most energy efficient city in the US has also had great success with energy benchmarking. Most of the cities leading the way on energy efficiency have adopted benchmarking ordinances.

In order to support these efforts, the energy utilities in these cities have partnered with building owners and municipal governments to streamline access to whole building data through the creation of easy to use web portals and by aggregating all of the accounts in a building in order to provide usage for the building as a whole. Even utilities in regions without benchmarking ordinances have adopted this standard to support the energy efficiency efforts of their customers. A list of the utilities that currently support web portals and aggregation supplements this memo.

Staff hopes the discussion between the Committee and other stakeholders results in a collaborative effort that leads to the development of a web portal that can provide building owners with:

- At least 18 months of electric usage data for each building
- Calendarization of data so building owners receive data based on month to month periods, not meter read dates.
- Aggregation of electricity usage from all meters in buildings with multiple tenants so the property owner has access to whole building data
- Data downloads in XLS format so it can be used in Excel spreadsheets

This would provide the basic information that a building owner would need to comply with the requirements of the city's benchmarking ordinance. Some utilities have developed portals that can provide additional data including information about demand charges, more than 18 months worth of data, and a process to upload data directly to the EPA's Portfolio Manager platform.

Staff is prepared to work with any stakeholder who can help us advance this work. The first two bullets outlined above represent technical or coding challenges. Other utilities or partners with technical expertise may be able to assist with this work. The third bullet will require an examination of privacy policies at the corporate and regulatory level. Other jurisdictions have established aggregation thresholds that allow utilities to report whole building data while protecting the privacy of individual account holders. Policies from other utilities may serve as models us. Stakeholders such as the Office of the Public Advocate and Efficiency Maine may also have insight that will help establish a workable policy. Staff from the Institute for Market Transformation (IMT.org) have assisted many cities and utilities with implementing benchmarking ordinances and have offered support and technical assistance to us and our stakeholders as we move forward.

I look forward to a productive discussion during our meeting which I hope will lead to a fruitful collaboration with all of our partners and stakeholders.