

Montague Energy Committee Minutes 03-17-2026

Meeting takes place on zoom.

Present: Sally Pick, Ray Sebold, Jason Burbank, Pam Hanold. Facilitator : Sally. Scribe: Jason

Chris Nolan-Zeller updates:

Chris was unable to attend.

Discussion on becoming a Climate Leader Community

Sally reports some recent information on global warming potential (GWP) of spray foam, an insulating technique likely employed to some extent in new construction meeting the specialized energy code. Ray notes that spray foam is frequently used in any new construction, being very valuable in certain situations. Open cell foam typically uses a water based blowing agent with no appreciable GWP: the latest closed cell technology now uses an HFO blowing agent also with no appreciable GWP. The overall manufacturing process however still involves environmental costs, with the carbon costs of manufacturing taking 20-25 years to be offset by the operational savings in carbon, according so Sally. She notes Rachel Roberts, a Greenfield building inspector, and Jacob Racusin of Builders for Climate Action as sources. Ray suggests we don't have time at present to study in detail but that he and Jason could look further into it.

Discuss committee goals, individual interests, potential new directions

Jason opines that the committee has potential benefit (still) in providing guidance and education on energy matters. Concerning energy policy he thought a significant accomplishment was the state requirement for electrical utilities to provide a certain mix of renewables in their electricity sources.

The current program for training around winserts was noted as beneficial, although the committee is not currently involved.

Ray notes the discussions around specialized code adoption may not have much direct energy effect in Montague in light of the few new houses being built.

Sally noted professionals on the Farren renovation project were concerned with affordability problems which could be code related.

Climate Leaders Community: Sally is not necessarily committed to making it a priority at the moment because of high building costs for all types of construction projects but notes the incentives available to homeowners & the town. Also, using incentives, all electric home construction could offer savings over conventional.

Ray invited Dan Rosenberg from Real Pickles to join MEC; he does not have time at this point, but would consider it later.

Pam notes potential resource of young people at the tech school, etc.

Other agenda items were tabled.

Next meeting May 12, 4:30-6:00 pm. Meeting adjourned at 6:05 pm.