

Tuesday April 26, 2022

Montague Energy Committee

By Zoom, 4:30-6 PM Tuesday April 26, 2022.

Present: Chris Mason, Ariel Elan, Tim Van Egmond, Bob Rueter, Jason Burbank, Sally Pick.

Chris facilitating; Sally taking minutes.

Approved minutes from March 22, 2022.

State-level energy-related policies & legislation

- Net zero stretch code:
 - Sally brought up email that Steve Ellis forwarded regarding Northampton requirements for donating to Habitat and net zero energy performance for one building. Chris will report back on these Northampton regulations.
- Other legislation:
 - Sally reported that MA climate legislation has passed in House & Senate and is under further consideration.

Update on gas industry seeking to prolong the use of methane fuel

- DPU receiving comments on docket #20-80.
 - Ariel has begun reviewing comments submitted.
 - AG has requested an investigation of gas utility companies.
 - AG has not asked that they be required to phase out fossil fuel use.
 - Ariel's sense from review that gas companies are likely to be given control of gas use.
 - Gas companies hired a consultant to review.
 - Gas companies pushing for "green" natural gas with hydrogen.
 - Hydrogen corrosive to pipes and is more explosive.
 - June 22nd is final date for public comment.
 - Ariel will draft comment for energy committee to consider submitting to selectboard to send to DPU.

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Energy-related Facility Updates:

- Outdoor lighting upgrades to LED:
 - Montague Center Lighting District meeting on April 27th, so Tim and Chris will be able to report back to MEC after they meet with the lighting district.
 - Walter was not able to include LED lighting in spring Green Communities grant because Town has not yet completed project funded by last grant. LED lighting proposal will be submitted in fall.

- Ventilation:

Jason spoke with Heath Cummings:

- Heath told Jason that he is not able to turn off ventilation at night, weekends, on vacations at the moment at Sheffield & Hillcrest.
 - MEC could tell Joanne Blier that we're concerned about energy and costs wasted at schools due to excessive ventilation. Standard approach to turn off ventilation at these times.
 - MEC could compare gas bills in 2019 (we may have that information) with this and possibly other recent years.
- Jason reviewed ventilation information that Chris Sawyer-Laucano.
 - European standards require higher ventilation than U.S. standards.
 - ASHRAE & EU standard recommend maximum possible outside air for healthy air and include filtration where possible.

Possible Project to Recommend for ARPA Funding: Tabled.

- No idling signs
- PV/battery storage

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Announcements

- FRCOG Coalition of Energy Committees next meeting, 6pm Thursday, May 5.
- Sen. Jo Comerford holding virtual People's Town Hall May 11th at 5pm.
- Chris was on Making It Here re-run on PBS about geothermal at Northampton Senior Center.

Plan agenda for next meeting: Tim will post.

**Other topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of the meeting.
Votes may be taken.**

Action items:

- Chris will report back on the Northampton net zero regulations.
- Bob will look at Senate bill amendments to see if there is anything to act on.
- Ariel will draft comment to DPU on Docket 20-80 for the energy committee to consider submitting to selectboard for approval.
- Chris will talk with Walter about potential energy-saving ARPA projects.
- Ariel will contact Joanne Blier at schools to get annual gas bill or monthly for 2021-2022 and possible other recent years, to help identify added costs of ventilation at nights and on weekends.

Next meeting: Tuesday, May 17, 2022, 4:30-6pm