

MONTAGUE ENERGY & SOLAR PLANNING COMMITTEES JOINT MEETING
Minutes Tuesday July 25, 2023, 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM

Designate facilitator and scribe 4:35 PM: Sally Pick Facilitator, Tim Van Egmond Scribe

Attending: Jason Burbank, Tim Van Egmond, Bob Rueter, Sally Pick, Ariel Elan, Chelsey Little, guest;

Approve minutes from June 27, 2023 MEC meeting (vote). Motion to approve minutes as amended seconded. Approved.

Discussion with Chelsea Little, Superintendent of the Clean Water Facility

- Hydroelectric power history at CWF. Referred to document she sent Jason and Sally, will send to rest of committee. How the unit performed and what happened to it is unknown. CL speculated that it probably wasn't maintained, stopped working and was removed.

Potential for new hydroelectric installation at CWF: CL has learned of a MA DEP Gap Energy grant program that's coming out with a fourth year. She shared her screen to show the committee a mini-hydro system in Fitchburg as a case study, has been estimated to have savings to the town in over \$10,000 per year for electricity. Jason Burbank estimated that the payback period for the municipal share of the cost for the system would be 8.5 years, 36 years for the total cost including state grant funding. CL has talked with Walter who says it's possible to get a META grant for a feasibility study.

CL reported that the fully electric transport van (a Ford Transit) was delivered last week and is in a post on the CWF's Facebook page. They're using an adaptor to charge it on a 220 volt line, while a power station is on back order.

Community Planning For Solar with U. Mass. Clean Energy

Sally got a draft report of the solar survey from the U. Mass. Clean Energy Extension. They're working on reviewing and revising action plans. They took on ten towns, and it's taking time. Everyone on the Solar Planning Committee is willing to stay on for another year.

Helping Town Prioritize Energy-Saving Projects for Upcoming State & Federal Grants. Review energy project ideas compiled by MEC for Town in preparation for new funding sources, including ARPA monies already distributed to Town but not yet fully allocated, additional ARPA funds to be distributed to Towns by a MA bill, & federal Infrastructure & Inflation Reduction Act funds assigned to the state.

Discuss where process is for exploring PV for Town Hall Annex, DPW and Safety

Complex: Ariel said that the PV on the Town Hall Annex is out for bid. Sally is looking into the concept of Community Solar for low income residents with an array on the DPW.

Update on Proposed Green Communities Grant Projects: Sally said checking on ERV or HRV at the CWF for the next application is on her to do list. The next application is due in September.

Energy Related Facility Updates: Jason will check with Walter Ramsey on the status of funding the conversion of Montague Center streetlights to LED. No news on Elementary School ventilation. Net zero

and energy efficient techniques including embodied carbon was tabled. Sally will work on it when she has time.

State & federal level energy-related policies & legislation updates:

- Three bills addressing embodied carbon are before the TUE Committee. Our state senator Jo Comerford is the sponsor of one of them. One Senate bill is to set up a system for an embodied carbon advisory board in the DOER. The City of Cambridge has set up a study of a life cycle analysis of embodied carbon. There's a proposed bill that would require the use of lower embodied carbon cement in concrete for state and municipal projects, and another bill that would require low carbon alternatives for a number of materials used for state and municipal projects. Embodied carbon makes up 11% to 23% of annual global carbon emissions, according to the RMI.

Municipal Electric Aggregation: Sally said this has been brought up as a way to reduce carbon emissions. However, the matter is complex, and there's no guarantee that it will do so or lower bills. The options for the supply mix to opt into determine the cost. This would be "a big lift," and not necessarily worth it at this time. Greenfield's experience with this has been marginal. There would be more "bang for the buck" with other things we're considering, such as Community Solar.

Possibility of transitioning to biodiesel for heating Town buildings using oil & for Town trucks that use diesel: Tim said that the celebration his contact at Northeast Biodiesel had told him the plant was going to have didn't seem to be publicized, and was not on their web site. The consensus was that since they aren't distributing biodiesel yet and don't have plans in place for blending biodiesel and regular diesel, it's too early to work with them. We should hold off until it's more feasible.

Adding Missing approved minutes to the Town web site: Members who have taken minutes will see if they have approved (or any) minutes that fill in the gaps that Tim identified. If they can, they'll send them to Tim, who will send them on to Walter all together.

Motion to adjourn, seconded. Unanimous vote in favor.