

Montague Energy Committee Minutes, Tuesday, December 26, 2023

By Zoom, 4:30-6 PM

Present:

Tim Van Egmond, Jason Burbank, Pam Hanold, Sally Pick; guest: David Dempsey.

Tim facilitating; Sally taking minutes.

Approved minutes from Sept. 26, Oct. 10, Oct. 25, & Nov. 28, 2023 MEC meetings.

Community Planning For Solar with U. Mass. Clean Energy Extension

- Discussion about draft plan summary and how to engage Town department heads, committees/board in solar planning:
 - Ask BOS for feedback about reasons for needing to plan for solar
 - Explain that it is critical to get Town participation in solar planning
 - MEC is not recommending any specific plans at the moment; it sees plan as a framework for identifying planning opportunities, options, possible next steps.
- Solar Forum:
 - Content:
 - How will Town help meet MA greenhouse gas emission targets in keeping with preferences identified by solar survey?
 - UMass Clean Energy Extension faculty, Zara Dowling, is a resource for Town solar planning. Ideas for forum content from Zara:
 - Provide a short overview of draft *Plan* document and survey.
 - Share solar planning experience of other Towns.
 - Provide perspective on solar Town zoning in context of current state rulings and related potential future state guidance, incentives, laws.
 - Address questions and help discuss next steps for Town leaders and community such as an ad hoc committee, Town staff-led steps, including solar planning in Town plans.
 - When schedule? Sally will ask Wendy about scheduling the forum Wednesday, March 20 or March 27, 2024, from 5-6:30pm, during Town staff hours.

Update on Green Communities Grant Projects

- Outdoor lighting upgrades to LED: Montague Reporter article said that they are in process. Sally heard from Bruce Watson that may start to be installed Jan. 2024.

Energy Related Town Facility Updates.

- Clean Water Facility: META grant updates on hydroelectric power.

Tuesday, November 28, 2023

- Tim emailed Chelsea for an update; will forward her reply to MEC members.
- Elementary School ventilation:
 - Heath Cummings, Sheffield/Hillcrest school facilities manager, informed Jason that there are no time controls on Hillcrest & Sheffield ventilation and that he'd be happy if control grant funds were allocated for it.
 - Jason thinks cost would be limited to time clocks and installation costs. Estimates \$10-20,000 per building to install ventilation controls. Possible Green Communities grant for next round or maybe out of school budget.
 - Jason will ask Walter his thoughts on funding this at next Capital Improvements Committee.
 - Jason could make estimate energy savings from adding controls for Sheffield & Hillcrest, if can visit with Heath.
- Information on net zero and energy efficient techniques, including embodied carbon. Tabled.

State & federal level energy-related policies and legislation updates.

- Discussion of Town opting into Specialized Opt-In Stretch Building Code. Tabled.
- Other legislation & policies, including Green Bank, Inflation Reduction Act updates. Tabled.

Discuss working with Gill energy committee to encourage G-M School Committee to pursue Mass Clean Energy Center BETA pilot program that creates decarbonization plans for school buildings.

- Actionable plan would be developed by program.
- Sheffield & Hillcrest up for discussion for being replaced, so may make sense not to focus on these unless BETA program would advise for a new building.
- High school is G-M school, as is the Gill elementary school.
- Tim will contact Alden Booth to propose to Gill energy committee that we set up a special meeting mid-January or joint meeting Jan. 23rd MEC meeting first thing.

Recruiting more Energy Committee members. Tabled.

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Helping Town Prioritize Energy-Saving Projects for Upcoming State & Federal Grants. Tabled.

Adding missing approved minutes to Town website. See above.

Other topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of the meeting. Tabled.

Announcements (no discussion). Tabled.

Next meeting: Tuesday, January 23, 4:30-6pm

Action items:

- Sally will:
 - email Walter approved minutes in PDF form for posting onto MEC website.
 - email David draft Community Solar Plan and Wendy Bogusz's email address.
 - email Wendy: add to January 22 BOS agenda appointing David to MEC.
 - call Walter to ask for advise on how to get select board's interest in engaging in solar planning and get them to encourage department heads and related committees/boards to attend Solar Forum.
 - draft and send to MEC PowerPoint slides for her meeting with BOS.
 - email Wendy with March dates for Solar Forum and will check with Zara Dowling of Clean Energy Extension for availability March 20th or 27th.
 - email Mass. Clean Energy Center to see if their BETA pilot program includes helping to plan new buildings that are fossil fuel free.
- David will:
 - email Wendy requesting that he be appointed to serve on MEC.
 - contact Matt Lord to talk about draft *Community Solar Action Plan* and Solar Forum, to gauge interest in solar planning.
- Jason will plan a visit with Sheffield/Hillcrest school facilities manager, Heath Cummings, to get an idea of potential of cost savings from ventilation controls.
- Tim will email Wendy Bogusz note that David Dempsey would like to be appointed to MEC.