

**MONTAGUE ENERGY & SOLAR PLANNING COMMITTEES
JOINT MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, March 28, 2023, 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM

Designate facilitator and scribe: Tim facilitating, Sally scribe.

Present: Tim Van Egmond, Ariel Elan, Sally Pick, Pam Hanold, Bob Rueter, Jason Burbank.

Called to order at 4:35 PM. This meeting is by Zoom and is recorded.

Approved minutes from Feb. 28, 2023 MEC meeting with changes discussed.

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

- Sally reported on outreach and press for solar survey in progress.
- Sally will ask Wendy if she can email solar survey to Town Meeting members.

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

- Bob has not heard back from Greg Garrison of NE Solar re getting PV scope and budget for Town Hall Annex, DPW & Safety Complex, to propose to the select board the idea of using ARPA funds allocated to the Town for these projects.
 - Ariel raised concern re cost/benefit of ownership vs PPA/lease.
 - Town could explore lease-to-own agreement, among options.

Update on proposed Green Communities Grant Projects

- Walter was not able to meet March 30 deadline. Next deadline is Sept. 29th.
- Jason:
 - He will reach out to Walter about what information he needs to apply for our recommended projects for the next grant deadline and how MEC can help gather information.

Energy Related Facility Updates

- Outdoor lighting upgrades to LED:
 - Tim will let Montague Center Light District know that Green Communities grant is delayed and check with them about where they are in their process.
 - Chris has sent MCLD information he has gathered re converting to LED streetlights, including cost estimates. Chris needed to resign from MCLD, because of his new position as the regional Green Communities coordinator.
- Elementary School ventilation – Checking in with Heath Cummings: ventilation running all the time?
 - Jason reached out again to Heath but has not heard back from him. Previously, Heath has said that his understanding is that the teachers' union contract does not allow ventilation to be shut off at night or when the schools are closed.
 - Interest in exploring actual contract wording to see if ventilation can be adjusted when the school is not occupied.
- Information on net zero and energy efficient techniques, including embodied carbon. Tabled

Turners Falls Airport Ground-Mounted PV Proposal

- Sally showed MEC maps that indicate that most of proposed land for PV development at the airport is in priority habitat for rare species according to BioMap2.
 - She will check with new town planner, Maureen Pollock, about this issue.

Explore possibility of transitioning to biodiesel for heating Town buildings using oil & for Town trucks that use diesel

- Tim has put a call in to NE Biodiesel to start exploring possibilities.

- Pam said that when this idea was raised with DPW a number of years ago, they had concerns about biodiesel not working for trucks in winter.
 - May no longer be a problem with new DPW facility or depending on the fuel mix (percent of biofuel).

State level energy-related policies and legislation updates

- Discussion of Town opting into Specialized Net Zero Stretch Code: Tabled.
- Other legislation & policies, including Green Bank, Inflation Reduction Act updates. Tabled.

Recruiting new members for Energy Committee

- 9 seats total for committee, according to Town MEC webpage.
- 3 open seats at the moment.
- Ideas for recruiting: article in Montague Reporter, getting younger people on committee, committee members talking with people in town.

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

Announcements

- Greening Greenfield's workshops on heat pumps/mini splits coming up.

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 25, 4:30pm

Action Items:

- Jason will ask Walter about MEC-identified priority Green Community Grant projects.
- Tim will let MC Light District that Green Communities grant is delayed and check with them about where they are in their process.
- Bob will check back with Greg Garrison of NE Solar re getting PV scope and budget for Town Hall Annex, DPW & Safety Complex.
- Committee members will talk with people in town potentially interested in serving on MEC, to try to recruit new members.
- Sally will ask Wendy if she can email solar survey to Town Meeting members.