

Montague Energy Committee (MEC) Minutes 4/23/2024

Designate facilitator Tim and **scribe** David

Present: Sally Pick, Tim Van Egmond, Ariel Elan, David Dempsey.

Guest: Ferd Wulkan.

New Climate Resilient Schools Coalition introduction: (by Ferd) Their goal is to build teams including students and teachers to work with school boards and administration to work on decarbonizing school facilities, buses, etc. We discussed the Mass. Clean Energy Center's BETA program and the school district's applications for that program for decarbonization plans for the Turners Falls High School and Gill Middle School, which meet many of their goals. David will speak with Ferd later.

Approve minutes from March 26, 2024 MEC meeting: Approved as edited by the committee.

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

Sally shared the invitation that she sent to the town administrator, assistant town administrator and several solar-related department heads. Sally wants to check with the town about whether the MEC can also attend the department head meeting and whether there has to be a public meeting notification for it. The invitation has gone out to the department heads, administrators. Sally has been working on an up-date of the MEC web page, so that the documents we want to share on the Action Plan are readily available to the public and town staff. Sally is working on the invitation for the general Solar Plan meeting. River is working on the presentation, in collaboration with Sally.

Update on helping Gill-Montague School District apply for Mass Clean Energy Center BETA pilot program creating de-carbonization plans for Turners Falls High School & Middle School, joint effort with Gill Energy Commission. David reported that Heath Cummings has completed the application for the high school and sent it into the Mass. CEC. David to share with MEC the copy of the grant application for the high school. Heath will complete the application for the Gill Elementary school building and will share it when done.

Update on Green Communities Grant Projects. No news to report

Energy Related Town Facility Updates.

- Elementary School ventilation. Tabled.
- Information on net zero & energy efficient techniques, including embodied carbon: MA Building Electrification Accelerator (BEA) (non-profit) has offered help with exploring de-carbonization of town buildings. Ariel says that all the Mass School Building Authority and other agencies already require that RFPs need to include these already. Embodied carbon is looking at the amount of carbon in a building material through its entire life span (e.g. concrete has high

energy/carbon impact, but there are varieties of concrete with lower impact, so are more desirable). Sally's understanding is that MSBA and other state agencies do not require building decarbonization, though they do favor it. She is also fairly sure that MSBA's requirements do not include using low-embodied carbon building materials and knows that other agencies do not yet require low-embodied carbon building materials.

- MA Building Electrification Accelerator (BEA) offer to help Montague explore town building electrification:

MA Building Electrification Accelerator (BEA) (non-profit) has offered to help Montague explore town building electrification: ideas of buildings. Consensus was that the Town Hall needs improvements in weatherization, ventilation, and adding geothermal heating and cooling. David and Ariel asked about the credentials of the MA Building Electrification. Sally would like to discuss with BEA what resources they could provide for exploring decarbonizing the Town Hall. Sally will reach out to them and see what they have to offer across town buildings.

Discussion of Town opting into Specialized Net Zero Stretch Code: Tabled

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

Grid Infrastructure Issues

- Efficacy of a letter from MEC or other action to address restricted grid capacity.
The consensus was to leave it up to the Select Board.

Recruiting more Energy Committee members. This is on the Solar Forum general meeting agenda.

Helping Town Prioritize Energy-Saving Projects for Upcoming State & Federal Grants. (See Mass BEA, etc. above)

Adding missing approved minutes to the Town web site. Tim will search for older minutes that need to be approved.

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

Announcements (no discussion). FRCOG Thursday May 2nd meeting; Tim to forward announcement.

Plan agenda for next meeting. 5:55 PM

Action Steps: David to write up minutes for 4/23, edited March minutes and submit to Walter.