

MONTAGUE ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES March 25, 2025

Called to order 4:35pm

Present: Chris Nolan-Zeller, Tim Van Egmond, Jason Burbank, Sally Pick, Ray Sebold, Ariel Elan, David Dempsey.

Designate facilitator and scribe: Tim, Jason

General updates and Discussion with Chris Nolan-Zeller, Town Asst. Administrator

Update on Building Decarbonization Roadmap for nine Town facilities, funded by the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) from DOER.

EECBG looking at 9 buildings.

Among them the Senior Center and Unity Park field house seem quite promising for improvements.

Field house good for weatherizing and rooftop solar. Getting quotes for insulation and air sealing.

Town Hall looks promising for its heating and dated cooling system.

UMass intern possibility: due to high demand available resources have been exhausted.

Chris was asked to update our needs for the future.

Chris notes the input to the Mass Energy Insight (DOER's energy reporting system) has been quite challenging and he had been hoping that UMass interns could have helped.

Chris will ask building inspector (Bill) about recent town history of building permits.

Question arose about accessory dwelling units, whether affected by optional stretch code.

We'll ask Chris Mason.

Discussion of Town exploring possibility of becoming a Climate Leader Community

Sally notes biggest hurdle is often adopting the specialized opt-in stretch energy code.

Sally suggests first we meet with building inspector.

David suggests we should, like Ashfield, look at vehicles.

Components of the CLC application would require some town meeting warrant articles, namely the specialized opt-in stretch code.

Others could be part of separate budgets, for example zero emission vehicles.

Chris believes police dept has a few hybrid cruisers.

Ashfield had to trade because of insufficient ground clearance.

Our current police chief does favor hybrids for cruisers, however.

Sally shows us document from Built Environment Plus.

Approved minutes from January 28, 2025 and approved February 5, 2025 with corrections.

State & federal level energy-related policies & legislation updates

Sally notes state is working on policy recommendations required by the 2024 MA climate act, for factoring in embodied carbon in construction.

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

Sally suggests contacting land trusts to inquire of imminent solar development affecting high value conservation lands.

Montague's Solar Action Plan is on the energy website.

Schools and Energy. Tabled.

Energy Related Town Facility Updates

Jason gave a brief update on the Carnegie Library basement renovation with newly installed heat pumps. Sidewall cassettes used. Delivered only 65F space temperature in coldest weather of the largest room with high fan speed. Caitlin's room, with lower fan speed, ran with 85F temperature at ceiling and 63F at floor. Could be helped with running higher fan speed.

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

Energy Saver Home Loan Program (ESHLP) and promotion of program

Sally announced Center for Ecotechnology webinar on ESHLP was shared to MEC's email list.

David offered to draft something for the paper on the topic.

Recruiting more Energy Committee members.

A list was published in the reporter of all vacancies needing filling.

Adding missing approved minutes to the Town web site.

There are minutes to upload, David will work on October.

Other topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting: none

Announcements

Sally noted Bill McKibben presentation, including such news as excess solar electrical generation in California.

Pakistan has reduced electrical use due to solar...

Offshore wind, cancelled in New England due to Trump administration.

Plan agenda for next meeting.

Ask Chris Mason to present about CLC for town.

Meeting adjourned 6:05