

Montague Energy Committee Minutes 9-9-2025

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

Facilitator: Tim, Secretary: David

Chris raised the question of whether we had enough participants to make up a quorum before Jason joined the Zoom. Apparently, because there are nine committee positions, we need to have at least five members present to have a quorum. There was discussion about asking the Select Board to reduce the size of the committee to seven to make it easier to insure that we have a quorum. Chris will look into what the procedure is for resizing the committee.

Discussion with Chris Nolan-Zeller, Asst. Town Administrator exploring possibility of becoming a Climate Leader Community.

Chris reviewed the new procedures necessary to get an article added to the Town Meeting warrant. If we pursue the Climate Leader status we need Town Meeting votes on the Building Code and on the Decarbonization of town facilities, but we do not need a TM vote on Zero Emissions First Vehicles policy. We reviewed the memo that Chris had sent out detailing the reservations that the housing and development experts had concerning the adoption of the Specialized Stretch Code (SSC). Chris said that the Select Board was not just concerned with the implications for the development of the Farren site, but its impact on development generally.

Sally reported her efforts to get specific examples of what cost differentials, if any, are in SSC buildings from multiple sources had proven very difficult. Ray pointed out that low-income housing is less likely to attract developers because there is less of a payback than there is for more up-scale buildings. The new housing planned for across from Town Hall will be all-electric, so it will meet the SSC criteria.

After the discussion we voted to not try to get the two articles on the fall Town Meeting warrant. We would work on preparing for a request this fall to the Select Board to adopt a Zero Emissions Vehicles First policy for the town. David will continue his research into other towns with EV police cruisers and what the costs are for installing EV chargers at the public safety complex.

Announcements:

Tim: People are encouraged to contact their legislators to oppose Governor Healy's bill to including nuclear power as a source of electricity.

Sally: Embodied Carbon Public Hearing 9/29/2025 at UMass.

All other agenda items tabled

Next Meeting: October 21, 2025 4:30-6:00