

Montague Energy Committee Minutes, Tuesday, February 27, 2024

By Zoom, 4:30-6 PM

Present:

Tim Van Egmond, Jason Burbank, Pam Hanold, Sally Pick; David Dempsey, Ariel Elan.

Tim facilitating; David taking minutes.

Approve minutes from January 23, 2023 MEC meetings. Approved

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

Solar Forum: Sally reports that the UMass faculty have not responded about their availability for April. Select Board (SB) thought there might be one meeting for relevant department heads and then another made up of relevant boards and committees, but Zarro suggests that the 2nd be open to the public. Sally liked the idea of an open forum to spread the news and recruit more members for the MEC. Sally is meeting with Maureen Polluck on 2/28/24 to work on logistical planning for the forum.

Format, hybrid or online only? Sally advocates for hybrid or zoom only. Maureen would like it to be hybrid at the Middle School/High School, but there are costs and logistical difficulties. Zoom okayed by MEC, but Sally to check with Maureen about whether there is a strong reaction against zoom-only meetings.

Setting tentative date, May? Sally to check with River about his availability.

Update on Mass Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) BETA (Building and Electrification Transformation Accelerator) pilot program creating decarbonization plans for large buildings, joint effort with Gill Energy Committee to engage G-M School District.

Report from David:

The sub-committee met twice to discuss and draft a letter asking Brian Beck of the GMRSD to join us and apply to MassCEC.

The sub-committee reached out to Walter Ramsey to determine who “owned” the building because there were questions about that. Walter confirmed that the building is owned and operated by the GMRSD.

The sub-committee also reached out to the Mass CEC for clarification of the question of who is the best applicant for a building and whether there were still slots available in the program. There are slots and it seems that Brian Beck, the superintendent would be the best party to sign the request.

We drafted a letter to Mr. Beck.

Letter was edited by the committee and approved pending final review by the Gill members of the sub-committee.

Update on Green Communities Grant Projects

- Outdoor lighting upgrades to LED: Sally reports that most, if not all, of the street lights have been replaced with LEDs. Tim will check with Bruce Watson about the status and also whether there are shading options for folks who have light shining into their house(s).

Energy Related Town Facility Updates.

- Clean Water Facility: META grant updates on hydroelectric power. **Tabled**
- Elementary School ventilation. **Tabled**
- 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.
Chris Mason (Regional Coordinator for our area) is available to do a presentation on the Stretch Code. Sally reports that we are moving to all Green Communities having to adopt the Stretch Code.
- Other legislation & policies, including Green Bank, Inflation Reduction Act updates.
Sally reports that the Grid-Enhancement bill is making progress. Sen 2131 was voted out of committee with approval, so it may help get better terms for hooking up solar arrays e.g. Montague Airport.

Recruiting more Energy Committee members. -- Tabled

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

Adding missing approved minutes to Town web site—

Tim was able to report that the July 2023 minutes had been approved, so he sent them to Walter.

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

- **Announcements (no discussion).** Tim reported that there is a public comment period Commission on Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting is hoping to hear from the public “regarding ways to balance the need for accelerating the responsible deployment of clean energy, meaningful community engagement, and an equitable clean energy transition.”
- Monday, March 4 from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm – [Zoom Link](#)

- Tuesday, March 5 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm – [Zoom Link](#)
- The Commission is also accepting written comments through the [surveys linked here](#) or directly to the Commission at CEISP@mass.gov.

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 26, 4:30-6pm

Action items:

- Sally will:
 - Post approved minutes to Walter
- David will:
 - Run edited letter by the GEC and send to Superintendent Beck copies to the committee.
- Jason will:
 - Contact Heath Cummings re: ventilation at the elementary school
- Tim will:
 - Check with Bruce Watson about the status and also whether there are shading options for folks who has light shining on their house.