

MONTAGUE ENERGY & SOLAR PLANNING COMMITTEES JOINT MEETING MINUTES

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

Designate facilitator and scribe: Sally facilitating, Tim scribe.

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

Called to order at 4:40 PM. This meeting is by Zoom and is recorded.

Approved minutes from Jan. 24 MEC meeting with changes.

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

- Solar Planning meeting scheduled right after MEC joint meeting.
- Students sent out a draft report / assessment on resource and infrastructure to Solar Planning Committee. Now being revised considering comments and suggestions.
- Students on fast track for community survey. MEC asked for help getting survey out once it's ready.

Vision for Committee: "Big Picture" - what we can do, what are our personal interests.

- Bob R., how big are we thinking, what can we accomplish? How to make big transition off of carbon? Town government only, or town-wide?
- Pam H., very interested in educating and communicating about energy changes people can make, trying to give them the space to embrace these changes and find help with specifics, but doesn't think we have the time individually or collectively to do this. Or to do other things for a greater role for the committee.
- Ariel E. Reducing municipal use of fossil fuels as much as possible and supporting state policy that expedites that. Educate the world that methane is a very damaging substance.
- Jason B. Not religious about zero carbon, gas pipelines, but feels it's important to reduce fossil fuel use. Has no optimism about our ability to stop manmade climate change, but it's imperative to reduce it's impact.

- Tim VE, MEC most tangible way of taking action, hopes we can up our game and think outside our own box without draining ourselves. Perhaps we can adopt ideas from other local Energy Committees, or take collective action through the meetings of Franklin County Energy Committees convened by FRCOG. Concerned about fossil fuels' impacts on health as well as climate crisis.
- Sally P. Very concerned about climate crisis. Hard to bounce around as we have from one thing to next. There are opportunities from federal money coming in, thinks there are big possibilities in how MEC can help town and public take advantage of those opportunities.

Recommendations for Green Communities Grant Projects

Sally summarized some ideas we've discussed such as LED street lighting, heat pumps.

- In discussion that followed, ventilation and weatherization of Town Hall deemed important, including health considerations of filtration and bringing in outside air (ERV) in energy efficient way).
- Controls for Hillcrest/Sheffield schools so ventilation not constantly running when buildings not in use. Insulating Mechanical Room, ducts. Jason B.: ventilation not always working, some automation would help. Schools and Town Hall, doesn't think we're doing the rudimentary measures. Pam H.: if separate zones between North and South sides of building, some separate controls for different offices or sections of offices, town staff would be behind it.
- Agreed to recommend Town Hall #1, Schools #2, LED street lights #3.

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

- Bob R. reported that Town Administrator has okayed moving forward to with preliminary scoping and budgeting for considering adding solar to Town Hall, D.P.W. and Public Safety Complex using ARPA funds. Town Administrator has talked with D.P.W. Supt. Tom Bergeron about this.

Energy Related Facility Updates

- Outdoor lighting upgrades to LED: tabled.
- Elementary School ventilation – Checking in with Heath Cummings: ventilation running all the time? Tabled.
- Information on net zero and energy efficient techniques, including embodied carbon. Tabled.

State level energy-related policies and legislation updates

Tabled.

Letter to Maura Healy about steeply reducing methane emissions & stopping new pipelines.

- Tim approached Ariel about helping, Ariel say she'd need to pass this task on. Ariel will send Tim information so he can consider drafting the letter.

Update on gas industry seeking to prolong the use of methane fuel. Tabled.

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

Announcements

- Sally P. forwarded an email earlier today to MEC about Airport plan to set up solar array. Siting problem with rare species habitat.

Plan agenda for next meeting.

Adjourned 6:03 PM.