

Energy and Climate Action Committee

Minutes – 4/18/2023

Virtual Meeting

Chair called meeting to order at 7:04pm.

Committee Members Present: Michael DeChiara, Miriam DeFant, Gail Fleischaker, Nate Heard, Graeme Sephton, Zoe Weizenbaum

Committee Members Absent: None

Public attendees: None

Old Business/Updates

* Status of Community Choice Aggregation

DPU lawyers and Donna McNichol have not yet corresponded, so CCA is still on hold. Graeme suggested it be put on the Warrant for ATM in case a decision is made in the meantime. Michael will talk to Rita about the feasibility of CCA as a Warrant article.

* Status of MVP grant

ECAC had suggested two projects for Select board authorization: feasibility study for a storm water conduit and a solar installation for the new library. Preview discussion with MVP staff made clear that feasibility studies are not currently funded, so Shutesbury's MVP grant application will be for a 100-kW solar installation on the roof of the new library. Becky will submit the application (due May 4).

* Committee member terms for new fiscal year

Returning members: Nate, Miriam, Michael, and Gail. Graeme and Zoe will not be returning. Leslie resigned at the end of March.

New Business

* Ideas for wind deployment

Nate outlined the history on consideration of wind as an energy source for municipal buildings. Generally, wind does not have a good financial return in New England, as distinct from installation in open plains. A small (10 kW) wind turbine was modeled in the 2009 [Energy Audit Program Report](#), but it had a poor financial return. A 100 kW turbine was modeled, with better financial returns, but neither Town Hall nor the Elementary School have enough property setbacks to allow a turbine of that larger size. The assessment also suggested the potential for social/neighbor resistance to a wind installation at these town-owned parcels. The 2009 report raised the possibility of finding alternative sites north of Town Hall for a turbine of 100-250 kW capacity, "which would potentially produce enough electrical power for all five municipal buildings." Nate: not sure what sites "N of Town Hall" might refer to, but surely technology has changed in the fourteen years since the Report, maybe social response/resistance as well. Nate will delve further and report back.

Minutes from past meeting

Miriam moved and Gail seconded approval of minutes of 3/21/23 meeting as amended.

Approval was unanimous: DeChiara, aye; DeFant, aye; Fleischaker, aye; Heard, aye; Sephton, aye; Weizenbaum, aye.

Discussion: Next steps for Committee

This first year the ECAC has approached residential energy use (2022 energy survey) and Community Choice Aggregation. What now, going forward with new members?

- Pull action items from focus groups.
- How to deal with ‘crushing weight’ of fossil fuel use in town?
- How to lower use of burning wood?
- Library programs of loaning out induction stoves? Nate will check with Mary Anne and come back to ECAC.

Zoe reported getting a farm grant for a methane bio-digester. Operation: organic matter is fed into an anaerobic digester, water is added, and with no air, the material ferments and creates methane gas that can be hooked up to a stove.

Next meeting: Tuesday, May 16th

Motion to Adjourn: Gail moved to adjourn, Graeme seconded the motion. Approval to adjourn was unanimous: DeChiara, aye; DeFant, aye; Fleischaker, aye; Heard, aye; Sephton, aye; Weizenbaum, aye.

Meeting adjourned: 7:57pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gail Fleischaker