

Pelham Energy Committee (EC) Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 22, 2020

Virtual meeting (recording is available)

Meeting called to order: 7:44 PM

Present: John Larsen (JL) (co-chair), Tony Rogers (TR), Randall Spalding-Fecher (RSF), Judith Eisman (JE)

Note-taker: Randall Spalding-Fecher

Minutes

- Approved minutes of August 25, 2020 unanimously

Zoning Board and Solar Bylaw

- Planning Board (PB) did not have quorum for meeting on Sep 21; Oct 19 will be next meeting (PB meeting at 7pm; public hearing 7:30pm)
- History: 2015 PB saw the need to review existing solar bylaw; only started acting in late 2018; PB considered this through all of 2019; Pioneer Valley Planning Commission provided input as well; PB was ready to move in March 2020, but COVID slowed down process; Jeff Lacey and attorney worked on it (former asst AG) for Shutesbury (AG approved), use this and Plymouth as models
- Replace existing bylaw (new by law, table of uses, definitions, new zoning map – 4 with large scale (15 acres)); new proposals must protect four times the land disturbed (e.g. 10 acre array needs 40 acres protected); prefer roof mounted and building mounted as of right. Small scale up to 1.5 acres allowed with special permit anywhere in town – must be associated with residence or business that will use >50% on site; need to keep out of NW district of town (water supply, habitat, etc.)
- also have conservation value map to show what cannot be used, as well as rare species map, etc.
- Zoning Board would grant for small and building mounted; Planning Board deal with large solar districts – only can have one in each district except two in largest district so only 5 in total
- JL asked whether site review requirement for residential “by right” requirements under Green Community designation; JE will look into this, but given that Shutesbury is also a Green Community, it should not be a problem.
- JL asked by 15 acres was chosen as the maximum size of a large scale array. JE noted that PB did not want to be unreasonable. Shutesbury and Plymouth both use 15 acres. In addition, since the protection of four times the land is required, this relates to total size of parcel required. Also needed to be economically feasible, so need more than 5 or 10 acres.
- JL noted that adding a nameplate capacity limit is not needed; JE agreed and this does not appear in the proposed bylaw.
- JL noted that solar installation for residential adds property value and therefore increases town tax revenue.
- Solar Bylaw will be voted at fall Town Meeting.

New Business

- No new business

Member search

- No updates

Community Center VRF project

- Good news: Winning bidders have agreed to hold their prices until Town Meeting, so the project could start immediately after TM approves the funding

- Volunteer time from town committees can be counted as part of the Town's matching funds; TR will confirm the rate with Andrew from MVP as well as required documentation and format of reporting; TR will ask Andrew from MVP about format for reporting volunteer time; RSF will then follow up to create a shared document (e.g. Google sheets) to report volunteer time.
- JL is working on annual Green Community report – all looks good so far.
- EC discussed whether the VRF project needs a "Clerk of the Works" (CotW), and what level of supervision; SB needs to decide this.
- EC discussed needs for CotW, what role they could play, etc.
- We do not need full time oversight but need some oversight in addition to the role of RW Hall.
- Need to define roles and responsibilities to be the "eyes of the client"
- Rick Adamcek (RA) knows two people who might be able to play this role – person would ideally understand VRF systems, but maybe just HVAC/AC experience.
- Town employee time is also considered as matching funds.
- JL and RSF to send comments on email for SB; TR to also follow up with RA and John Trickey to refine inputs to SB.
- TR to check with Susannah whether the CotW position needs to be publicly advertised

Community Choice Aggregation

- No task force member identified yet

Town meeting items

- JL submitted Warrant Article on VRF project requests to SB; John Trickey commented; Susannah in town office has final language and will be on the table for Town Meeting in October. JL will follow up to double check language.
- JL will confirm hearing date and time with Town for formal notice – to present VRF project and financial request

Old Business

- No old business

Next Meeting

- Tuesday, October 6 at 7:30pm

Meeting adjourned at 9:34 pm