

MINUTES

Meeting of: Pelham MA Energy Committee
Date of Meeting: November 14, 2017
Time of Meeting: 3:30 PM, formally opened at 3:35 PM Adjourned at 5:10 PM
Location of meeting: Ramsdell Room, Pelham MA
Members Present: Stan Swiercz, Tony Rogers, Alisa Pearson, Dan Robb, Peter Hepler
Notetaker: Peter Hepler, with amendments by Alisa and Stan

1. Previous meeting minutes not available for review.
2. New EC (Energy Committee) Members: Report from Dan about finding additional member(s) for the EC. He approached Mike Hayes about joining the EC, but Mike said no. This decision was also thought to include Mike's wife, Sarah Hayes. There was discussion about what role Dan, himself would like to play in the EC. He allowed he was happy to help, and if that meant being an Associate Member, he would do so. The committee did not vote to pursue Associate Member option.
3. Article for the Pelham "Slate": Alisa reported that she has been collecting brief statements from each EC member addressing reasons why each of us is willing to serve on this committee. Dan agreed to compile and edit these statements and draft the following description: Green Communities history, META work to make Community Building a Safe Have, and Solar Thermal Challenge.
4. Additional points of discussion touched upon a variety of related issues, including a 15K MVP (Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness) grant, see <https://www.mass.gov/municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-program> -including the need for greater flexibility in its application, on the further exploration of the installation of PV systems on town property (Meta Grant; Sustainability of the Town Building), and on the desirableness of a safe place in town for town inhabitants to gather in the event of a disaster.
5. Solar Consultant search: Stan, as he had explained in the previous meeting, noted that there was primarily one firm, Solar Designs Associates (SDA) that has shown interest in our projects, and that this may be sufficient. (see Minutes from 11/07/17)
6. Pelham Town Microgrid: While in theory the idea of Pelham establishing a microgrid to handle our electric needs seems attractive, in reality, establishing this grid, as Tony strongly emphasized, is rather more problematic, and it would almost certainly increase our electricity costs. There are several important issues to keep in mind, such as the relatively small scale on which Pelham operates, the difficulty in our town, which is blanketed by forests, to produce renewable energy and indeed more than we use, and the need to develop storage mechanisms etc. Nevertheless, a separate electrical provision system has been developed in Sterling, MA, and while that town is bigger than Pelham, nevertheless it has fewer than 10,000 inhabitants. In our long term planning we may be able to learn from them how to create a microgrid in Pelham, or in a consortium of 2 or 3 adjoining towns.
7. Update on CCA (Community Choice Aggregation): It was noted by Stan and others that Amherst was involved with CCA and was seeking to shift to 100% renewable energy for the town. The problems faced with being completely fed by renewable energy are huge

and almost certainly beyond the capability of Pelham at this point. It would be rather more reasonable, as emphasized by both Tony and Dan to seek to reduce our carbon footprint, and that the EC should help implement these efforts. Impacting our efforts are the different attitudes among town committees regarding the time line for progress, with Alisa emphasizing that the Town may need a decade, even two to see fiscal payback, whereas the Finance Committee usually works on a much shorter (2-3 year) schedule. As has happened in previous meetings the discussion comes back to our Community Center, which although relatively new, presents massive problems with its poor construction and inadequate insulation. This is a case example for the trials of short-term thinking and budgeting. In the continuing saga about the Community Center, more data are needed.

8. Solar/Thermal Challenge: It was widely recognized that the inhabitants of Pelham could gain significantly from the installation and use of Solar Water Heaters. Roughly 25% percent of home heating is used for generating domestic hot water. While there are costs needed for the installation of these solar thermal units, there are also a variety of rebates and tax credits that can markedly reduce (~ 70%) the total costs. As part of an educational campaign, Alisa suggested that note be made of the efficacy of these units in the Pelham Town Slate. The EC voted unanimously to help the town move in the direction of adopting the installation of Solar/Thermal units.
9. Green Communities Report; Mass Municipal Association; USDA Funding: Brief comments were made on all these.
10. Meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm. The next EC meeting is tentatively scheduled for Dec 5th at 7:30 pm.