

MINUTES

Meeting of: Pelham MA Energy Committee
Date of Meeting: December 5, 2017
Time of Meeting: 7:30 PM, formally opened at 7:39 PM Adjourned at 9:17 PM
Location of meeting: Ramsdell Room, Pelham MA
Members Present: Stan Swiercz, Tony Rogers, Alisa Pearson, John Larson, Dan Robb,
Peter Hepler
Notetaker: Tony Rogers

- Minutes
 - Minutes from the Nov 7 meeting approved unanimously with one abstention (Dan abstained). Minutes from the Nov 14 meeting approved unanimously with one abstention (John abstained)
- Slate Article
 - Motion to submit Slate article as edited and with the addition of Dan's information and photos of each of us. Seconded, approved unanimously
- Green Communities Annual Report
 - Motion to ask select board to approve and sign the Green Communities Annual Report. Seconded, approved unanimously.
 - Stan was thanked for his effort on this. We will see if someone else might do it next year.
 - Discussion related to possible future Green Communities grant applications:
 - Turner's Falls safety complex has a ground source heat pump. Alisa is getting more information.
 - Stan is planning to talk to the budget meeting about addressing issues with the Community Center piping
- Solar PV Consultant Next Steps
 - No bids were received for the solar consultant. We don't have a site that is attractive for possible financing
 - Discussion of other possibilities for getting solar in the town:
 - Others approaches for solar
 - Stan – how about investors from the community investing in community solar
 - Peter Hepler reported on the Solarize MA program – targeted at towns, individuals, started 2011 – four communities were involved. A vigorous education campaign to get solar. For a community, you need 1000 homes. Program is restarting. It is a lot of work by the community. The hot water challenge on steroids. 400-600 volunteer hours over a 4-month period. Deadline end May. Only a few towns win. Only get \$5000 for the town. Dan asked: how big would a municipal solar project need to be financeable?

- Get better pricing structure from installer. Alisa - Maximizes possibilities for the town carbon footprint. Need volunteer hours. Maybe we just get residents to sign up and see if one can get a discount as a group from a solar installer. Can we leverage the grants we have? Stan wants to stay out of jail. Stan – Coop power has a community power czar? Can they give us ideas? Ameresco? What could they do?
- Power from an anaerobic digester (cow poop to methane) through HCOG. Stan very hesitant about HCOG – they seem to have lots of ways to get money for themselves out of a project. It would also be very risky, financially. We would need sign a 20-year contract. Net metering credits could go away in a few years if they have their way.
- Stan much more confident about coop power's integrity. John – get's electricity from a project. Saves 15% of 40% of bill. He can get out of the agreement. We should invite Ameresco and coop power in for discussions about what they see is possible. Tony – we need costs for solar on town buildings so we can think about scale of the problem, possible funding.
- Revisit solar PV possibility
- Alisa – we need a way to think about who in town and might support a community solar project.
- Stan - we want to use it as much as possible behind the meter.
- Should we do a project on town land or buy into a project elsewhere? Or for homeowners.
- We could use GIS maps to talk to landowners about possibilities for solar.
- Tony – solar installers will provide cost estimates for free. We should get those so we know the basic system costs and can then think about the financing.
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- Motion to task members to get an array of providers to give us system costs.
- Discussion:
- Let's deal with the town property question first. Look into Municipal buildings and land.
- Dan – anything to lower cost of community center would generate interest from the town.
- We will need to craft questions for installers.
- **Motion – Stan reach out to coop power, Tony to Ameresco, the others reach out to solar installers - Dan, Valley Solar; John - Northeast Solar and Peter - PV Squared**
- Schedule the walk around and invite others on the committee. We may need to coordinate with Rick for walk-arounds.
- Set up walk around as soon as possible.
- Solar Hot Water Challenge – Stan will send out material when available
- Next Meeting Date - Jan 2 tentatively. Report in if can't make it.
- USDA Funding
 - Money is available for town improvements from USDA. Grants and no-interest loans. There is a USDA office in S Amherst. Will it apply to clean energy

projects? For fixing the Community Center heating system? The school might also need new furnace soon.

- John will call the local USDA office. Alisa will call middle school about furnace.

▪ **CCA Update**

- The CCA group is meeting on strategy. Northampton is planning to vote soon on its 100% renewable proposal. Paul Fenn will be coming back to town. Maybe we can set up a discussion with him.