

## 7/18/16 Westport Energy Committee Meeting Minutes

The Monday 7/18/16 meeting of the Energy Committee in the Selectmen's Conference Room was called to order by Chairman Tony Connors at approximately 7:05 PM. Other members present were Mike Sullivan, Karl Daxland, Max Kohlenberg, and Walter Barnes.

The minutes of the June 6/20/16 meeting were approved as written.

Chairman Connors contacted the Westport Fire Department regarding their position on fighting fires where there are rooftop solar panels. The department spokesman reported that the panels could not be turned off. However, this does not prevent adequately fighting the fire including putting a hole through the roof. The department does not presently have a particular position on this matter and prefers not to.

The first item on the agenda discussed by Chairman Connors was the Town electric vehicle update including how to encourage wider usage by town employees. The usage of the electric vehicle has been good. The Building Inspector has used the vehicle the most followed by the Town Administrator and then the Board of Assessors. There has been a fair amount of savings in transportation costs since this program was initiated. This has been possible because the state grant covered the cost of the charging station and part of the cost of the monthly lease payment of the vehicle itself. This program lasts for 3 years. During this period, the greatest savings result from greater use of the electric vehicle for official town business. Possibly, there could be an inducement program for greater usage by offering a higher reimbursement for use of Town employee's own vehicles for town business after reaching a predetermined threshold for usage of the electric vehicle.

The next item was the solar credits update. Chairman Connors reported the bookkeeping requirements are considerable and require a schedule Z. Mr. Barnes noted that he had heard that Eversource can elect to pay for the credits with cash. However, they would be unlikely to do so except for towns that have extremely large electricity accounts. Westport has only about 30 individual accounts. Borrego, the owner of the solar farms from which the town receives their solar credits, assisted the town in determining how many credits they would be entitled to on an annual basis without oversubscribing and having to sell them. Their calculations were correct.

The next item Chairman Connors brought up was the Green Community status. As stated on their website, "The Green Communities Designation and Grant Program help municipalities navigate and meet the five criteria required to become a Green Community, in turn qualifying them for grants that finance additional energy efficiency and renewable energy projects at the local levels."

A city or town must meet these five criteria to be designated a Green Community:

### Criterion 1

Provide as-of-siting in designated locations for renewable/alternative energy generation, research and development, or manufacturing facilities.

#### Criterion 2

Adapt an expedited application and permit process for as-of-right energy facilities.

#### Criterion 3

Establish an energy use baseline and a plan to reduce energy use by twenty percent within five years.

#### Criterion 4

Purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles.

#### Criterion 5

Set requirements to minimize life-cycle energy costs for new construction; one way to meet these requirements is to adopt the new Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS) Stretch Code.

The ensuing discussion included bringing consideration of Westport becoming a Green Community to Town Meeting. The greatest challenge of the five criteria would probably be criterion 5, the Stretch Code. Selectman Sullivan felt the town should not force this on homeowners. The concern is that the town benefits more than the homeowner.

In new business, Chairman Connors stated that the developer for the landfill solar project is still waiting for the release of the SREC III regulations by the state.

The chairman announced that there are two new candidates for the Energy Committee awaiting approval by the Board of Selectmen. One was in the audience, Richard Brewer. He stepped forward to introduce himself. Mr. Brewer indicated that he is a member of the Finance Committee and that it would be beneficial to have a liaison between the Finance Committee and the Energy Committee.

The chairman proposed that the next meeting be held on Monday, August 29.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Walter Barnes