

7/21/2014 Westport Energy Committee Meeting Minutes

The Monday 7/21/14 meeting of the Energy Committee in the selectmen's conference room was called to order by Chairman Tony Connors at 7:04 P.M. Other members present were Leo Brooks, Max Kohlenberg, Ed Goldberg, Karl Daxland, and Walter Barnes. Absent were John Ciccotelli and Michael Sullivan.

Karen Stewart of SEEAL will explain the Solar Challenge for Westport: The Committee has expressed in the past that one of their functions is to inform the home owners of Westport of possible energy options when it comes to running their homes. As part of this process, Karen Stewart, assistant director of the Solar Energy Challenge of the Southeastern Environmental Education Alliance (SEEAL) a fund of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts (CFSEMA), will explain the Solar Challenge for Westport.

Ms Stewart went into great detail about the Solar Challenge followed by a question and answer session. She stated that SEEAL is a program of the Community Foundation which is made up of over 20 partners in the region. They include The Coalition for Buzzard's Bay, Trustees of the Reservations, Mass Audubon, SRPEDD, BCC, and the Westport River Watershed Alliance. The Solar Challenge is available only in SouthCoast towns. In 2013, Rochester, Marion, Mattapoisett, and Fairhaven participated in the program. Dartmouth participated this year.

After the town enrolls in the Solar Challenge, SEEAL conducts an outreach program to inform residents how they might benefit by equipping their homes with solar electric systems. For those residents who register, there is then a free home assessment for solar panels. Help is available all along the way including information about solar panel vendors.

SEEAL also offers a more comprehensive program known as the SouthCoast Energy Challenge.

The educational part of the Solar Challenge is done at no cost to the town or the home owner. RGS Energy actually installs the solar panels. This well known firm was carefully vetted by SEEAL. Ed Goldberg wanted to know if there was any remuneration to SEEAL from RGS ENERGY. Ms Stewart indicated there were contributions which were used to help fund their internship program.

After Ms Stewart had left, the Committee decided that the information regarding the Solar Challenge should be presented to the Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator. Chairman Connors will follow up on this.

Update on the Electric Vehicle (Ed): Ed and Tony reported that their research regarding an electric car for Westport was complete and that this would be an excellent undertaking for the town. Thousands of dollars would be saved by the state grant which would provide a large part of the reimbursement for both the car and the charging port. This would include leasing the vehicle. So far, the first car to consider would be the Nissan Leaf. The Committee expressed their appreciation for the hard work done by Tony and Ed on this project and was in favor of moving ahead. Tony and Ed will be communicating with the Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator.

RFP for the landfill site: Tony discussed the possibility of leasing the landfill for a solar farm which could generate electricity to provide credits for a qualified municipal entity other than the Town of Westport. He asked for a volunteer to assist in this project.

New business: Walter thanked Tony Vieira for his 3 years of outstanding service on the Energy Committee, much of which was as committee chairman. The other attending members extended their thanks.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Walter Barnes