

1/30/2012 - Westport Energy Committee Meeting Minutes

On 1/30/2012, Chairman Antone Vieira called the meeting of the Energy Committee to order shortly after 6:00 PM. Attendees were Walter Barnes, James Bartlett, Kathleen Cummings, Karl Daxland, Edward Goldberg, and Max Kohlenberg. New members who were introduced were Tony Connors and Paul Velho. Also present was Westport Interim Town Administrator Jack Healey.

Ms. Cummings presented the Committee with NStar/NEGas whole building energy assessments dated 11/14/11 for three municipal buildings: Westport Middle School (energy performance rating of 90), Westport High School (energy performance rating of 98), and Westport Town Hall Annex (energy performance rating of 90). The assessments were performed by Energy Management Associates, Inc., were funded by the energy conservation charges on utility bills, and the numbers were from the utility company buildings' energy use data and a walk-through of the buildings. Action steps were listed and Chairman Vieira suggested that though the buildings are energy efficient the subject be discussed at a future meeting. Ms. Cummings added that homeowners might arrange for residential assessments through MA Save.

Carlos Pineda, Principal and Founder of Clean Planet Energy and Project Manager of Future Generation Wind, LLC, presented a Project Overview and Net Metering Offer to the Town of Westport dated 1/12. The 8MW (four turbines) project is to be located on Mann Farms, Inc. in Plymouth, MA, a cranberry farm that supplies Ocean Spray. Chairman Vieira pointed out the opportunity for the Committee to look at wind from another perspective. The contract term would be 25 or 20 years and the Town of Westport would receive net metering credits from NStar for a price per KWH at a 10% discount from dollar value with a floor of 12 cents per KWH. Questions from Committee members brought out that there had been three appeals on the project, a noise study would have to be done, Spanish Gamesa turbines are being considered (GE could not be certified for the site), and State and Federal Permits are in hand.

Beth Greenblatt, Managing Director of Beacon Integrated Solutions of Boston, MA, presented a detailed review of the many facets of the advisory service and strategic advice in managing the procurement process, optimizing project value, ensuring energy savings and production sustainability. Ms. Greenblatt spoke about the availability of renewable energy and energy management services from technical and design review through commissioning, measurement and verification and quality assurance. A handout narrowed in on the Town of Westport, Solar Photovoltaic Project. She put forth analyzing questions such as whether the Town should buy or build for net metering, contract 100% or a portion or KWH usage, what happens in 20 to 25 years, the difference between solar and wind asset values and depreciation, going-out-of-business possibilities, power purchase price and revenue stream issues, and risks of public policy changes regarding net metering benefits and the net metering tariff. Mr. Goldberg stated that it was important that the Committee know what it does not know. Ms. Greenblatt said that Beacon Integrated Solutions has provided economic analyses in the energy business since the 1980's and offers a fee for service basis. Ms. Cummings felt that a PPA needed more

analysis. Ms. Greenblatt said that Beacon Integrated Solutions offers a commercial perspective. Towns provide their own attorneys.

The minutes of the Energy Committee meeting on 12/19/11 were approved. Mr. Bartlett abstained because he was not at the meeting.

Chairman Vieira stated that the MA Clean Energy Center wants better zoning bylaws in Westport to bring the Town up to speed with reference to industrial wind turbines (380 to 420 ft). The Planning Board met on 1/11/12 to which all members of the Energy Committee were invited to discuss the Town of Westport Zoning Bylaws 2010, Article 17, the Commercial and Non-Commercial Wind Energy Facilities bylaw (with Atlantic Designs 12/5/11 comments). Chairman Vieira and Energy Committee Member Barnes attended. The Planning Board indicated it needs more time. Administrator Jack Healey preferred that the matter be reserved for the Annual Town Meeting on 5/1/2012. Chairman Vieira mentioned the 3000 foot distance from residential properties considered by the State. It was decided to form a sub-committee to discuss the by-law and members Daxland and Barnes would discuss the issue offline.

Administrator Healey updated the Committee regarding the EMIDS solar net metering proposal. Jack Arruda of EMI is awaiting the outcome of the Town of Westport Solar Farm Project Requests for Proposals process. The proposals will be opened on 3/2/2012. Over 79 requests for the RFP have been requested and an addendum was issued to allow any PPA presentations to address 1MW and/or 2MW. Negotiations start after receiving any proposals.

Mr. Goldberg was concerned about not being in the position to evaluate on any proposals. Mr. Kohlenberg agreed there was no tool kit for evaluation. Ms. Greenblatt had introduced at least twelve new variables into vision. Chairman Vieira felt that the Committee could not stop the movement in energy, its members could do their own research, and "pull the trigger on some energy projects to save the Town money." Mr. Goldberg and Mr. Kohlenberg moved and seconded the idea of having the Energy Committee explore retaining a good resource. Administrator Healey suggested a placeholder article to finance a consultant. Chairman Vieira has confidence that the ability of the Committee members could "go on our own as much as we can." For the audience, Jon Alden stated that 50% of Ms. Greenblatt's points were taken into consideration by Administrator Healey's experience. There was a unanimous vote for Administrator Healey and Mr. Goldberg as a sub-committee to explore funding for evaluating proposals.

Chairman Vieira deferred to a future meeting the agenda item of discussion of an overlay district for potential alternative energy generation as a separate by-law option. Likewise, no one was present from the Department of Energy Resources to discuss Westport as a potential green community for future funding opportunities.

Chairman Vieira summarized the status of wind turbines presently in use and permitted in Westport as numbering 14 with between 60 ft. to 140 ft. in height and many in farming.

Mr. Bartlett put forth the question as to whether the Energy Committee could establish criteria, operate on a limited budget, and target savings to the Town and return on investment. Chairman Vieira suggested reexamining the mission and generating revenue both long term and short term. Mr. Goldberg spoke of taking on a manageable project. Administrator Healey mentioned that EMIDS is willing to wait and phrased the possibility that the Town could take a piece of EMI and do a smaller option locally -- considering the benefits to the Town. Chairman Vieira spoke of the goal of the Annual Town Meeting 5/1/2012.

The next Energy Committee meeting was scheduled for Monday, March 12, 2012, at 6 PM at the Town Hall. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Walter F. Barnes