

## 12-13-12 Westport Energy Committee Meeting Minutes

The Energy Committee convened on Thursday, 12/13/12, at 6:45 PM in the Town Hall with Chairman Tony Connors, and members Tony Vieira, Walter Barnes, and John Ciccotelli. Also, present was Leo Brooks. Absent were Kathy Cummings, Ed Goldberg, Paul Velho, Karl Daxland, and Max Kohlenberg. Since there was no quorum present, only informational discussion followed.

Announcements: Mr. Connors mentioned a developing Town website to include energy links and agendas. There will be a solar energy symposium at UMass Dartmouth on 1/10/12 from 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM. He explained a State Senate bill that caps net metering for municipalities.

Mr. Ciccotelli spoke of the attraction of three-phase lines, such as those found on Horseneck Road, Main Road, Route 177, Old County Road, and Route 6 for energy facilities. It is costly to locate a facility more than ½ mile from three phase. Mr. Brooks noted that the question is how much load is on a circuit. Mr. Brooks also pointed out that solar panels have a degradation factor of ½ % each year. Mr. Vieira brought up the topic of a wind farm in Westport. Mr. Brooks noted that they are more effective in the wind states, such as Texas. Mr. Barnes said the sweet spot for wind is 28 mph.

Update on Cost/Benefit of Landfill Solar Project: Mr. Connors said the cost of the interconnect to the capped landfill solar farm is unknown. It could be between \$20,000 to \$100,000. Mr. Vieira favored spreading out the cost with ACE (American Capital Energy) or do as a Town up to \$100,000. Mr. Connors is concerned with inflation and whether energy prices rise or fall in the long term. He said all models show energy delivery charges will go up. The Town makes its money on the net metering credits. The company gets the electricity. One-third of the Town's KWH annual usage would be offset by the landfill solar farm. Mr. Barnes wondered why Westport had no information from NStar for over five months. Mr. Brooks spoke of the six month trigger which might help Westport.

Report on Research of a Solar Installation on Town Site: The topic of how to take advantage of the remaining 2/3rds of Westport KWH annual usage arose. Does the Town have other suitable sites for one or more solar facilities? Mr. Connors said the cost of a facility to generate each watt of electricity is around \$2.50. Discussion followed regarding if the Town wants to have its own power company and pay for such? Or, does the Town wish to have one or more private companies finance and run one or more facilities? Mr. Connors said the least risky was similar to the landfill solar farm arrangement with a private company. Mr. Vieira said he did not expect the Town to manage and maintain an electricity generation facility. Mr. Connors then presented the alternative of using an out-of-town solar or wind facility or facilities. Mr. Brooks mentioned a fuel cell farm as having huge Federal credits.

The next meeting will be Thursday, 1/10/13 at 6:00 PM in the Town Hall. The discussion disbanded at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by Anne Barnes

