

## 12/19/16 Westport Energy Committee Meeting Minutes Amended

The Monday 12/19/16 meeting of the Energy Committee in a Town Hall accessory conference room was called to order by Chairman Tony Connors at 7:02 PM. Other members present were Karl Daxland, Max Kohlenberg, Michael Sullivan, Richard Brewer, Buzz Brownlee and Walter Barnes.

Mr. Brownlee indicated that he was unable to access the videos of the Energy Committee meetings on the Town website. Mr. Barnes instructed him to go to the home page for the town and tap on, "View Meetings", under the Resource column on the left-hand side of the page. All recorded meetings are in chronological order.

Mr. Brownlee reported that he had received instructions from Diane on how to post information on the Energy Committee pages for the town web site.

Chairman Connors brought up energy audits as the first item on the agenda. The town administrator has yet to contact Eversource regarding this matter which the Committee previously decided was the next step in this process.

Mr. Connors then initiated a discussion of possible solar development on town land. The subcommittee of Mr. Connors and Mr. Brewer had arrived at two parcels which they felt might be appropriate for solar farms as previously reported. Mr. Connors thought it would be wise to find out how the land was acquired by the town and whether there were any tax liens. He will contact the Town Planner for further information. The chairman is still waiting for input from Power Management. When all the information is available, the matter should go to the Selectmen and subsequently to Town Meeting. Mr. Sullivan said that the town would lease the land to an interested solar developer. The Town Administrator has already set up a PILOT program for the Cuff Slocum Solar Farm and we can look to Tim King for guidance.

Mr. Brewer asked about the status of the proposed solar farm at the town landfill. Mr. Connors will seek an update on the process and present his findings at a subsequent meeting. Mr. Kohlenberg felt a good objective would be that some portion of the money paid to the town for any solar project on town land be allocated to energy needs of the town.

The first update discussed by Chairman Connors was the electrical aggregation program. The program started in January of 2016. The rate is 9.5 cents per kilowatt hour which was cheaper than the Eversource rate for the first half of the year and higher the second half. Mr. Barnes understood that Eversource is filing for a rate increase. The consensus was that we should know the rate before announcing it on the website.

Another issue introduced by the chairman was the status of the electric car program. Mr. King told him that the program was going great. In fact, there may be a need for a second vehicle. One person who could get good use out of a town vehicle would be the new Board of Health agent. Mr. Sullivan indicated that the town employees most likely to use a second electric vehicle would be those in the Town Hall Annex. Therefore, it might be worthwhile to have a second charging station located at the annex. The chairman noted that any charging station under the state program is open to the public. In any case, we need to start preparing for the next electric car program as the 3-year lease runs out in a year. The Town Administrator should be able to help us in this task.

The chairman then began a discussion of the proposed LED streetlight program. Mr. Seth Pickering had informed the Committee at an earlier meeting that the state would soon be announcing a grant program for LED streetlights which was independent of Green Communities funding. However, to the chairman's knowledge, this had not yet been done. Mr. Barnes responded that he had learned earlier in the day that on 12/13/16 the Baker-Polito administration announced \$11.4 million for a municipal LED streetlight conversion program. The town must own the streetlights to qualify for the program. Mr. Connors noted that the present streetlights could be purchased for \$1.00 for one utility and \$1.50 for the other. Mr. Brownlee pointed out that we would have to research the other costs for the project.

The next order of business was a discussion of Green Communities. Mr. Barnes presented a list of the top 10 projects for Green Community grants. The peak grant allocation was \$250,000 and included HVAC projects as well as LED street lights and vehicles. It is important to note that the building code requirements by the state are approaching those of the stretch code in Green Communities. The savings in energy costs by adhering to the stretch code may be as great as 20%. The stretch code applies only to new buildings. Mr. Sullivan said that the new code would be an imposition on homeowners so there would have to be a balance between costs and benefits. He went on to say that a case for Westport becoming a Green Community could be made to the Board of Selectmen. He also thought it would be helpful to get an opinion from the Planning Board. A subcommittee consisting of Chairman Connors, Mr. Barnes, and Mr. Brewer was then formed to assist in the process.

The last subject deliberated was remote meeting participation. This was recently brought up at a meeting of the Board of Selectmen by Jim Whitin of the Planning Board as reported by the press. State regulation now allows committee members and boards to participate in meetings remotely. The Selectmen approved remote participation for boards and committees in Westport. After hearing this, members of the Energy Committee discussed how this might apply to our committee. Multiple members were not in favor of this. Previous exposure to remote meetings had not been favorable to some. The conclusion was to think about the matter. In the meantime, the committee felt it would be a good idea to have a vice-chairman to preside over meetings in the absence of the chairman. Walter Barnes was nominated and elected as the vice-chairman.

It was decided to hold the next meeting on 2/13/17.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Walter Barnes