

11/21/16 Westport Energy Committee Meeting Minutes

The Monday 11/21/16 meeting of the Energy Committee in the Selectmen's Conference Room was called to order by Chairman Tony Connors at 7:01 PM. Other members present were Karl Daxland, Richard Brewer, and Walter Barnes. Absent were Max Kohlenberg, Michael Sullivan, and Buzz Brownlee.

The minutes of the 10/24/16 meeting were approved as written.

The first item on the agenda brought up by Chairman Connors was a brief discussion of energy audits. Apparently there were energy audits done at the Westport High School and the Town Hall Annex in 2011. Mr. Barnes noted that some towns were using energy managers to address energy audits in their towns.

The next item of business discussed by Chairman Connors was the solar incentive program. The expiring solar renewable energy credits (SRECs) program will be replaced with a declining tariff system. The tariff program's goal would be to double the amount of installed solar power across the state with slowly declining incentives for projects of all types. Apparently the incentives for landfill solar sites would be increased. Hopefully, the proposal will be put into place by August of 2017.

The next topic was possible sites for solar farms on town-owned land. Chairman Connors and Mr. Brewer conducted a review of possible sites and came up with two which look promising. One is a 29 acre site behind the high school and the other is a 29 acre site located along the east branch of the Westport River close to Fallon Drive. This information has been submitted to Power Management for their input. After their opinion becomes available, the matter will go to the Selectmen.

Chairman Connors then opened a discussion on website changes. After a thorough discussion, it was determined that it may not be possible to have an E-mail link to the Energy Committee via the town website where citizens could make comments and ask questions. Mr. Brewer pointed out this is a delicate area as far as open meeting law requirements. Mr. Barnes noted that the minutes of the Energy Committee are now posted on the town website (www.westport-ma.com). This includes posting of all the approved minutes for the year to date. Go to Town Resources on the left side of the Westport home page and then select Minutes and Agendas. The videos for the meetings can be viewed on the website. Go to Town Resources on the left side of the home page and select View Meetings. It is also possible to post agendas. The membership of the Committee has been updated on the website.

The update on ongoing projects first covered Green Communities. The consensus of the members present was that Westport should seriously consider this program. The Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator need to be further informed about the merits of this program. Furthermore, a town energy audit by Eversource should enhance this process. Mr. Barnes commented that state grants as high as \$250,000 can be made to a Green Community participant in one year. The three highest project types recorded in the program are interior lighting upgrade, weatherization/infrastructure upgrade, and HVAC upgrade. Please see the Green Communities Designation and Grant Program at the Massachusetts Department of Energy website under Green Communities.

As far as LED streetlights, the town needs to consider purchase of the streetlights. The state is soon to announce a municipal LED streetlight conversion program for towns that own the streetlights.

Under new business, Chairman Connors announced the recent dedication of the Cuff Slocum Solar Farm located off Old County Road close to Fisher Road and developed by Clean Energy Collective. This is an 18-acre solar farm consisting of 10,790 solar panels capable of generating 3.4 megawatts of electricity annually.

Chairman Connors mentioned roofless solar which is a community solar program that allows individual homeowners to buy into offsite solar installations at an estimated savings rate of 5%. A reference website is rooflessolar.com.

Mr. Barnes reported that people at home can be assisted in energy efficiency in their homes with an online home energy assessment or an onsite home energy assessment by Mass Save. This is a utility run ratepayer-funded program which offers a wide spectrum of energy efficiency measures for the homeowner. Both the on-line home energy assessment and the in-home energy audit are at no cost.

Mr. Brewer advocated keeping close tabs on the SRPEDD electricity aggregation program. As noted in the minutes of 8/29/16, Eversource lowered their electricity rate this summer. The aggregation program continues for one more year. Participants can opt out at any time.

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, December 19.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Walter Barnes