

3/11/13 Westport Energy Committee Meeting Minutes

The Monday, 3/11/13 meeting of the Energy Committee in the Westport Town Hall was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Tony Connors. Other members present were Antone Vieira, Karl Daxland, Max Kohlenberg, John Ciccotelli, Paul Velho, and Walter Barnes (7:05 PM). Absent were Ed Goldberg and Kathy Cummings. Also present was Selectman Mike Sullivan.

Vote on recommendation to accept terms of Landfill Lease and PPA with American Capital Energy: The PPA and the lease had been revised by Town Counsel, including an escalator clause. Selectman Mike Sullivan presented a mathematical analysis of the proposed contract with pricing and the escalator. The Energy Committee unanimously voted to go ahead with American Capital Energy and then voted on the proposed contract.

Discussion with Andy Steinke, Harbor Solar (in Westport), regarding options for the Town on solar projects: Mr. Steinke spoke about roof-top and land-based solar projects, volatility, solar equipment prices coming down, the variability of rates per KWH, locations of solar facilities in the Town, and land leases. He stated that Beverly High School has the oldest solar project around – 32 years. He said that siting requires four acres per megawatt of electricity and that the measurement should be to the poles with three-phase electricity capability rather than to the substations. He spoke about less maintenance and more control with micro converters on each solar panel versus central inverters. He advised that the Town have a PPA that has a fixed rate for decades and an escalator clause, that land lease revenue was not important, and mentioned that now China has initiated a carbon tax. Mr. Steinke said that out of sight siting works best for solar projects. Mr. Steinke clarified for Mr. Barnes that he was a primary developer who gets the permits and investors. The Town should have long-term deals, eg. its capped landfill.

Max Kohlenberg wondered if the Town is becoming a smarter consumer of energy. He mentioned a risk in market changes or technology changes.

The next meeting will be Monday, 4/8/13, at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Anne Barnes