

MINUTES

ENERGY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2012

5:45 P.M.

GREAT BARRINGTON TOWN HALL

334 MAIN STREET, GREAT BARRINGTON

- I. Call to Order at 5:45 pm. Present: Diego Gutierrez, Peter Greer, Nancy Rogers, Brandee Nelson, Alana Chernila, Chris Vlcek, Jenn Bailly, Ryan Caruso
- II. Approval of Minutes from December 14, 2011 Meeting – Diego Moved, Beth 2nd; Peter and Alana abstained.
- III. Town Buildings
 - a. RFP results – Update. A kickoff meeting will be scheduled with the consultant and the energy committee.
 - b. Other walkthroughs – Housatonic walkthroughs are still pending. Diego and Beth will work to complete them.
- IV. The Energy Reduction Plan (ERP) – other items, Energy Committee contribution – Peregrine will write the ERP. The energy committee will work to outline specific issues from the community.
 - a. Vehicles – Nancy had followed up with Ottawa Police Department on anti-idle issues and she will email the information to the committee for review.
 - b. Streetlights – Jenn spoke to National Grid – they may be able to provide data points to the Town but we will need GIS via Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to view the data.
 - c. Written report for submission – Peregrine to do; the committee's draft will be provided to the consultant.
- V. Town Energy Policy
 - a. Discussion of Solar Bylaw – status with Town Planner/Planning Board – Alana updated: Town Energy Policy is separate and distinct from Solar Bylaw. At this point there is no action on a solar bylaw. No applications are before the board for any specific solar projects. The Select Board has decided they would like to meet with various committees/boards with the goal of creating a vision for community around solar energy. This visioning session

can be used for future decision making. A meeting is scheduled for 2/27 at 6 p.m. Several committee members agree to attend.

Solar bylaw – The Select Board asked the Planning Board to draft a bylaw. The Planning Board investigated what a bylaw might look like and decided that a bylaw was not in the best interest of the Town for promoting solar energy development. The Planning Board prepared a letter to the Select Board outlining their specific reasoning. The Select Board discussion has centered around the need to both control and help solar along. Any decision is pending the Town Energy Policy meeting.

Peter discussed how the energy policy needs to consider energy development financing which requires subsidies to be economical. Our committee should understand the process and provide information to other the boards/committees. Solar mandate in state regulates how much or how little solar can be developed annually. Policy developed would have to fit into the mandate. Peter will prepare an overview of how the Solar Renewable Energy Credit (SREC) market works. Utilities have to produce renewable energy each year or be penalized or buy renewable energy. If there is too much supply then the SRECs don't have value. State has legislated 400 MW goal by 2020. We should add this to the discussion with the Select Board.

b. Public input, schedule a meeting for broader policy goals? Public meeting but no public input. Energy and Agriculture Committees, and Planning and Select Boards will be represented.

BRPC is aggregating power purchasing. E.g. Lanesborough is able to get \$0.01 cheaper power. Lee/Lenox are looking at solar installations on their landfill. What are opportunities in Great Barrington? Peter can take a thumbnail look at our landfill.

c. Goals and strategies for Town Energy Policy - long range timeframe
Goals for energy in the future – Energy independence? 25% by 2020? Could we invite an academic to participate in helping find ways to achieve big goals. Talk to Peregrine and Bard.

IV. Open Discussion Items

Annual Report to the Select Board is supposed to be for Fiscal Year 2011 – we are in Fiscal 2012. Alana will clarify if there is a specific reporting period. So that Chris can create the report.

Reviewed Planning Board letter on solar. Discussion of scale of projects, leasing arrangements, equity in participation, residential versus commercial and where metering is occurring followed.

Note from Planning Board letter: 3500 dwellings requires about 140 ac of solar with today's technology. At roughly 5 acres per megawatt (MW) 20 ac = 500 homes; The Planning Board's evaluation did not consider commercial energy consumption.

Discussed the home energy efficiency forum to be held March 6 at Mason Library from 5-7 pm – The purpose is to encourage energy efficiency in homes or small businesses and will be hosted by Aric Brown at Center for EcoTechnology. Note that folks on heating assistance have to use a separate low income weatherization program.

V. Next Meeting Date- Possible Agenda Items.

Feb 22nd @5:45pm here – Discussion on 2/27

VI. Adjournment. Alana moved, Peter 2nd and all approved. Meeting ended at 7 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandee Nelson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brandee Nelson", written in a cursive style.