

Sustainability Committee Minutes
December 6, 2023
ZOOM 7pm

Gary Martin, chair, called meeting to order and announced Holly Langer is leaving committee and is being replaced by Al Nierenberg, present. All members introduced themselves.

Brendan Sweeney, Assistant Town Administrator, was there to report Town had hired a small consulting firm, Pacheco Energy Management, to monitor the overall Town electrical usage and revise the Schedule Z net metering credit allocation. They will be reviewing this quarterly to determine if further changes to the allocation should be made. Radiant Generation does the billing but there was a question as to who has been signing the Schedule Z.

Brendan shared a spreadsheet of how the credits will assigned and the annual usage by building. Marc asked what total kWh is produced by Town PV, and Gary and Keith reported annually about 1.1GWh.

Marc asked if the Town had received the annual report that the solar owner is obligated by the contract to provide to the Town. Brendan said he had not seen one, but that he would check to see if they had sent one. Marc offered join Brendan on a call if that would help to resolve this issue.

Committee decided to set monthly meetings on 1st Tuesday of the month, Keith will send calendar invites for all members.

Gary said that the Principal at Spofford Pond School had requested a presentation by a Committee Member, possibly January. Marc volunteered to do this.

Gary shared a chart showing Town usage by building (annual energy usage in MMBtu) with Spofford Pond the highest followed by Cole, and then significantly lower usage at the Police Station. The Town Hall (which has a front door with no weatherstripping!) has the fourth highest usage.

The CMTA detailed feasibility study will give weatherization recommendations, different electrification options, and solar+battery configurations. The report to the School HVAC Committee is due in March 2024. The Committee will review, choose options, and may propose a Warrant article necessary to fund the full design.

Gary stated that new cold climate air source heat pumps can produce heat down to at least -13F, but ground source heat pumps can work at even lower temperatures since it relies on ground water that is always near +50F. Current Mass Save incentives are \$2,500/ton for air source and \$4,500/ton for ground source. This helps to make up for the cost difference, and ground source heat pumps are generally more efficient and have lower operational costs. If the design includes battery storage, National Grid will pay a premium for being able to take power from them during periods of peak loads.

Gary described the new Climate Leader Communities program for Green Communities which may provide up to \$200K/project funding for adding solar+battery storage for Town.

Requirements are:

1. Town must be a Green Community
2. Have a Sustainability Committee
3. Commit to eliminate fossil fuels by 2050
4. Create municipal decarbonization roadmap

5. Adopt 0 emission vehicle first policy
6. Adopt the Specialized Optimal Building Code

The Specialized Energy Code ensures that new construction has a very efficient building envelope, and that it is “net zero” ready for all electric hook up. This will require a Town Warrant item to adopt.

Meeting adjourned at 8:22pm

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Canonica