

Green Communities Meeting Minutes

October 17, 2023 – 9:30 am

Present: Michael Canales, Pat Flinn, Mike Buffoni, Laura Dubester, Miles Moffatt

Guest: Patrick White

AGENDA

BRIEFING

Patrick White about potential energy efficiency/renewable energy programs: Stockbridge qualifies as a Justice 40 community based on demographics (seniors) and income/energy costs. Few municipalities have this designation. Patrick had the opportunity to speak with the EOE Secretary and wants Stockbridge to access any applicable federal/state grants – especially related to energy/renewables. The “Solar for All” program is one possibility and at the state, they have a point person for federal programs. This is a good time to think about Stockbridge needs – households, businesses, non-profits, public/affordable housing. For example, does it make sense to add solar pv to the Town Offices or other site and designate the production to Pinewoods or another user.

CHARGING STATION

The EV charging units are now operational. The rate covers electric costs plus 30% to cover potential future maintenance costs. Michael hopes to propose a dedicated fund for the chargers for Town Meeting to consider. The Selectboard would like this Committee to consider and recommend whether and how much of an incentive should be offered to Town employees, volunteers, and Town-owned vehicles. We talked about whether it is fair for Town employees to receive a benefit and the consensus was that this would be good as long as it wasn't a cost of the taxpayers. This would be an incentive – along with the convenience of being able to charge the vehicles at work. We agreed that employees should pay the cost of electricity, but at this time not pay the “maintenance fee”. This would cover the cost and not represent a loss to the Town. Having EV charging stations is a convenience and small incentive that may help recruit municipal employees. We recommend this rate for any EV's purchased by the Town. (Mike B. shared that Sewer & Water is considering a small EV pick-up truck). We had a conversation about whether this incentive should be offered to people who complete the “conflict of interest” course – e.g. Town volunteers. Mike/Patrick estimate about 100 volunteers total (probably very few with EV vehicles). We agreed that this should be on the “honor system” (e.g. no enforcement required) and when they are parked at Town Offices for Town business. Every few years, the EV charging code could be changed to account for people who have moved or are no longer volunteers. Laura and Pat thought this is a good way to recognize and demonstrate appreciation for the contributions of volunteers.

Michael will bring this recommendation to the Selectboard (at cost for Town Employees, volunteers, Town vehicles)

UPDATES

STREETLIGHTING

The DOER grant project is complete and all Town streetlights (with the exception of Church Street and Ice Glen road) have been retrofitted with LED's. There was one complaint that has been

addressed. Church Street is “on hold” until many other priorities have been addressed. Ice Glen may depend on whether or not a homeowner wants to proceed on replacing them (for their historical significance).

The committee discussed the downtown lighting (owned by National Grid). The consensus is that the Town does NOT want to purchase these lights due to the risk and uncertainty of the below-ground access. Per guidance from the Committee, Mike C. will proceed to contact National Grid and ask them to retrofit with the 3,000 K LED’s.

MUNICIPAL AGGREGATION

The Town has submitted everything to the DPU (with Colonial Power as its contractor). Hopefully, the DPU will act more swiftly but we aren’t holding our breath.

DOER ANNUAL REPORT

This is in process with Laura and Mike B. taking the lead (due December 1). Laura will share with the Committee. Along these lines, Mike C. is exploring new heat pumps for the Town Offices. If cost-effective/eligible for a DOER grant, this would be a good improvement for the Town.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Dubester, Chair