

Green Communities Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2024 – 9:30 am

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

Guest: Hugh Page, DPW; Chris Mason, DOER; Patrick White, Selectboard

AGENDA

- Minutes of the 10/17 meeting were approved. Laura thanked Pat for her review and edits.
- The Committee reviewed the Annual Report and Laura will submit it to Theresa Zanetti for the Town Report.
- Climate Leader Program

Laura introduced Chris Mason, the Western MA Coordinator for the DOER Green Communities Division. Chris shared a slide show to explain this recently rolled out program from DOER. The Climate Leaders Program has a parallel structure to the Green Communities Program. However, the purpose is now to focus on emissions reduction – not solely reducing energy consumption. Climate Leader program goals are now aligned with the MA goals of decarbonization by 2050. Stockbridge is eligible to apply for this designation as we are a Green Community in good standing. For Towns designated as Climate Leader, eligible activities for grants are expanded.

Steps include (brief summary): Town meeting vote to commit to eliminate on-site fossil fuel use by 2050 in Town Buildings/operations; create a road-map to achieve this goal (Stockbridge can apply for consulting services to create the road-map); Town meeting vote to adopt the Specialized, Opt-In Stretch Code requiring new residential construction to be ‘electric ready’ (if not already electric); a commitment to procuring Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV) (first) as available; maintaining a ‘Committee’ to guide the Town and/or actively engage in projects. Additionally, the Town would be required to implement a “community engagement activity for each 3-year cycle.

Chris said that the technical service grants are anticipated to be awarded to Towns that have demonstrated leadership and commitment to these goals. For example, Stockbridge has installed EV chargers, submitted a Municipal Aggregation Plan to the DPU, and is already committed to protecting and planting trees.

Committee members and guests raised questions/concerns about whether the technologies were proven and available; whether the Town would be required to undertake measures that we didn’t feel were appropriate; and whether the grid could handle increased electric load. For example, would there be EV vehicles that could handle the heavy work carried out by DPW? What about needs for fossil fuel back-up in the event of cold weather? Are other Town practices affected (e.g. road salt or plowing). There has been push-back and confusion about the stretch code and the Committee felt that it would be helpful to have a better understanding and a public hearing/information session before bringing this before a Town vote (annual or special meeting). Miles wondered whether or not the Town could create the roadmap without outside assistance.

After discussion, the Committee voted to recommend that the Selectmen include a warrant article for this year’s Town meeting that expresses our commitment to decarbonizing municipal operations by 2050 and formulating a roadmap to achieve this goal. In addition, the Town will

apply for the technical assistance to create the roadmap. Michael will present this (probably at the first or second March Selectboard meeting).

Chris Mason will send sample warrant articles to Michael C. as well as the slide show to the Committee.

The Committee welcomed Chris's offer to present more information on the specialized energy code at a follow-up meeting. In addition, DOER could serve as a resource for a public hearing or other educational session.

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Dubester, Chair