

## **DRAFT MINUTES**

Green Communities Committee

Present: Laura Dubester, Michael Canales, Pat Flinn, Buck Smith, Miles Moffatt

Guest: George Woodbury

February 14, 2022 – 10:00 am - 11:45 am

### **1: Update on Streetlights**

**Off the record – confidential until announced by DOER / Selectboard:** Laura and Michael briefed the committee that Stockbridge has been awarded a grant of approximately \$62,000 to purchase and install the streetlights served by above grade circuits (e.g. not the downtown area). Once the grant paperwork is in place (Michael is working on this), George will submit the application to NGRID for its rebates. Michael will also contact NGRID to see the status of our purchase. Comalli Electric will maintain the streetlights on a time and materials basis. (Mike B. said that the WTP works with an electrician who also might be able to help).

We discussed the rationale for only buying above ground electric circuit streetlights:

Wary of service to downtown area: underground (full of water, in bad condition, poor lighting system in downtown); Pieced together; Many problems.

The Church Street lights (already owned by the Town) is also underground service and not in great shape. Above ground, just dealing with what is on the pole. May be instances with overground pole with no other utilities – would own wood pole and light.

George noted that we have a spreadsheet that addresses all this.

Q: Lights that are strictly streetlights (metal poles and arm). What do we own? We won't own fixture if electricity is brought to pole underground?

A: Only poles served by overground electricity will be purchased

Q: How does this mesh with what Selectboard is doing with downtown lights?

A: Mostly addressing intersection design (would install streetlights by town)

Q: Do we ask NGRID to put LED's downtown under its program?

A: We can see if we can negotiate with NGRID to convert to LED and have NGRID own them. Otherwise, we can ask NGRID to convert to LED's. This conversation can wait.

**Decorative fixtures:** There are three locations where there are decorative fixtures and each should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as to whether it is feasible and warranted to repair and replace OR whether the fixtures should be removed.

Church Street: Comalli looked at these 'decorative' lights. The bases, bolts, poles hit by salt and plows have deteriorated and need to be evaluated. Need to think about the whole pole. (Should we think about that as we upgrade?) Potentially we will have sufficient funding in the budget to take care of this as part of the project. There are 4 of these fixtures on Church Street.

If possible, repair/replace/upgrade: they are cast aluminum (metal); George W. will probably be visiting in early March and will take detailed photos to send to someone who does the castings. If this can be repaired, the fixture can support a screw-in LED and there is a good unit that would screw right in. We can also actually look at the fixtures to compare light output.

Some members felt that if feasible and not cost-prohibitive existing decorative fixtures on Church Street should be repaired and retrofitted with LED's. Others have suggested that these be removed or replaced with modern poles/fixtures.

Ice Glen Road: There are 2 (maybe 3) antique poles on Ice Glen Road that haven't had lighting for a long time. There have been no complaints and the consensus at the meeting is that these should be *removed*. Perhaps one could go into the museum and might have some salvage value. They are so far apart and short that they really aren't "street lights".

Sargeant Street – The same is true for Sargeant Street. We need more information to evaluate condition and options.

**Discussion of which fixtures to purchase:** George led this conversation. A key factor in addition to cost is the lead time to receive. He wants the Committee to consider 'glare'. The three recommended are LeoTech, Acuity (similar to LeoTech) and RSW: CREE. RSW CREE is the most expensive but best quality vis-à-vis glare and dark skies. With fewer than 200 fixtures, the increased cost would be approximately \$7,000. The Committee believes that if we are going to do this 'once', we should do the best we can and use this fixture. Newburyport selected this fixture and George can send a video. The fixture has pleasant light, will have the "control" (1-10); dimmable, 3,000 K and in his experience very few failures. Warranted for first 90 days – exchange fixture and replacement can be built into install contract. Thereafter the fixture is warranted for ten years

As we will basically have 1-2 fixture models, the Town can have spare inventory for easy replacement if and when needed.

Q: Trees obstructing lighting? What can we do and could the tree warden be engaged in this? Mike B. said that Ngrid has been recently working on this and the issues are primarily downtown. George noted that the *maintenance contract or NGRID (?)* allows contractor to cut limbs < 1.5 inch and within 3 feet of fixture.

## **2. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION**

Laura asked whether the Committee interested in exploring potential of an electric vehicle charging station and helping the Town look at this. There is potential for more funding as part of federal Infrastructure Bill, along with MA incentives. Projects that are "shovel ready" would probably have an advantage when it comes to grants. The Committee is willing to serve as a sounding board or assist with other tasks as needed.

Brief conversation about potential locations; ownership and fees; number needed; interface with commercial charging stations, convenience for users, demographics for Stockbridge.

People will continue to think about this. Potential locations include: Town offices (hard to find a parking spot now); old shell station on Route 7; alongside park on Park street. Pat will talk with Red Lion Inn and Miles will talk to NRM to learn more from their experiences.

### **3. MUNICIPAL AGGREGATION:**

Overview from Laura and Mike: As part of deregulation, cities and towns are allowed to negotiate for electric supply on behalf of residents/businesses (as they do for themselves!). The unique aspect is this is “opt-out”. If a household or business wants to stay with its current supplier or choose a different one, it can “opt-out”. If not, they will be part of the “aggregation” and service will continue with National Grid. At this point many, many, many towns are now part of aggregations to negotiate for better supply terms (based on their criteria).

Michael was key in creating the “Berkshire Aggregation” where each town has its own aggregation plan – but they came together to go out to bid for a supplier. At the time, the load served was key to a competitive bid. There would be several advantages to joining the Berkshire aggregation – same rates as neighboring towns, working together for a common purpose.

Key objectives include: stability of pricing in addition to competitive pricing (a 3 year contract with Berkshire aggregation); ability to include more renewables than currently required by utilities and thereby “move the grid greener sooner”. The Committee agreed that it makes sense to interview 2-3 Aggregators to make sure we are selecting the one we feel will be best for Stockbridge. Laura mentioned Peregrine and Good Energy in addition to Constellation (current Berkshire Aggregation supplier). There is no deadline – so we will move forward on this at our own pace.

Laura will send the committee the Power Point presentation prepared by Williams College students (Michael was interviewed and part of the presentation).