

Buckland Energy Committee

Meeting Minutes: 19 January 2022, 7:00 p.m. (held via Zoom)

Present: Committee Members: Michael Novack, Penny Novack, Margaret Olin, Harvey Schaktman, Brian Summer; Guests: none

Facilitator: Penny Novack

Scribe: Margaret Olin

1. *Open the meeting.*
2. *Review and approve minutes from 17 November 2021 meeting. (No meeting in December.)*
 - Approved unanimously as written.
3. *Discussion of solarize programs – past, present, & future – including state/federal incentives for residents, businesses, and municipalities, community solar initiatives; status of awarded META Grant for Community Shared Solar feasibility study and approved proposal from Northeast Solar (still in Phase 1)*
 - For the META-8 Grant, all work needed to conclude by 30 September 2021: project has gone no further; Heather has been in communication with Mark Rabinsky (Regional Coordinator, Green Communities) and Paul Carey (DOER) all along; as of the end of September, the grant was closed out: grant award was for \$12,500, though only \$2,300 was received and expended.
 - Penny: keep checking DOER website for grant programs and grant possibilities <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/eea-office-of-grants-and-technical-assistance>
4. *Discussion of local and regional energy-related issues, possibly including:*
 - Rail transport of fossil and other fuels; concerns about derailments, remaining railroad ties and debris along tracks
 - State-proposed energy legislation, including proposed “woodlands partnership”; response to Northern Pass; PACE Program & Green Works
 - Alternative electric power suppliers; municipal electricity aggregation program & any updates from Colonial Power Group
 - MassSave program updates
 - New Massachusetts programs: (through Mass CEC and DOER; Center for EcoTechnology --CET)
 - Municipal lighting/streetlights; new Lighting Advisory Committee
 - Recycle-able/biodegradable plastic bags; single-use plastics
 - PFAS Testing Program updates
 - Brian: recent “My Turn” articles in *The Recorder* stressed that there’s a lot of value in wild unmanaged woodlands. . . when discussing “management”, it tends to mean activity management, or setting it within an extractive industry. Also discussed credits for communities that are leaving forests intact for sequestering carbon; Buckland state forest land: can we as a town come up with how the townspeople would like to see it managed?
<https://www.recorder.com/Guest-columnist-Dr-Stephen-C-Frantz-44625827>
<https://www.recorder.com/my-turn-kellet-NortheastWildernessTrust-44390932>

- Harvey will ask Heather if we – as a committee – can submit informative and/or position articles to local media: because we are an appointed committee, can we take a public position?
- 15 December email from Denise Allard (Colonial Power) re: they're sending a consumer notification letter and opt-out card to anyone in Buckland who is on Basic Service but hasn't already been mailed to (e.g. residents who are new in town, residents who have ended a third party contract and switched back to Basic Service, etc). Town doesn't need to do anything: just letting us know in case anyone contacts Town about legitimacy of letter/program. We appreciated Colonial's record on keeping towns participating in the Municipal Electricity Aggregation Program updated. Good timing, given number of mailings arriving recently from "alternative electricity suppliers".
- Harvey called MassSave to see if they could provide a speaker for a public event: exploring possibilities – promotion coming through Hadley contractor
- Legislation for woodstoves 2020 changed, higher emission and efficiency standards, eligible for federal rebate One link: <https://www.hpba.org/Advocacy/Biomass-Stove-Tax-Credit> need to publicize this – perhaps by putting link & info on our webpage; also posting the IRS link: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/i5695.pdf>
- Buckland's newly formed Lighting Advisory Committee: no Energy Committee member is able to become the BEC representative at this time; will continue discussion at February meeting
- McCusker's using paper bags again in bulk section: picking up from where left off (pre-pandemic) on efforts to reduce plastics use

5. *Update on past Green Communities Grant applications; planning for 2022-23*

- *continue discussion on potential projects to include in future applications, especially those that will bring us closer to the 20% reduction in energy use marker*
- *DOER updates?*
- No updates

6. *Continue discussion of future public events, including:*

- *Future winsets workshop? Public forum on energy issues?*
- *Fall/Winter 2021-22 film series and/or discussion groups;*
- *budget for events*
- Harvey and Mohawk: Mohawk responded to Harvey's outreach that they're interested in idea presented at Nov meeting – potentially as part of a civics class: discussion on details is still in progress
- Videos that relate to energy issues: put links in our page on the Buckland website. . . we'll each try to find at least 1 video to share at next meeting, then put up on our page

7. *Update on MVP Grant current and future; Hazard Mitigation Plan Update*

- Meeting on 26 January:
<https://www.town.buckland.ma.us/home/news/watershed-based-assessment-and-climate-resiliency-plan>

8. Report back about other meetings/ activities in which committee members participate.

- Brian: 2 years working with NE Biodiesel, which is trying to re-open; have completed coop training: now 8 or more worker owners, GM, still working on getting funding <https://www.northeastbiodiesel.com/> Referenced this article from *The Recorder* <https://www.recorder.com/Northeast-Biodiesel-preps-for-starting-up-operation-44489697>

9. Other items not reasonably anticipated

- Ellen is resigning from the Energy Committee after many years of service. We'll miss her! We thank her, and will also miss her expertise.

10. Choose facilitator and scribe for next meeting.

- Next meeting potentially 16 February, 7:00p.m., also via Zoom

11. Adjourn meeting

- at 8:52p.m.