

Buckland Energy Committee

Meeting Minutes: 27 September 2023, 7:00 p.m. (held via Zoom)

Present: Committee Members: Michael Novack, Penny Novack, Margaret Olin, Harvey Schaktman (*left meeting at 8:04*), Brian Summer; Guests: *None*

Facilitator: Penny Novack

Scribe: Margaret Olin

1. *Open the meeting.*
2. *Review and approve minutes from 23 August 2023 meeting.*
 - Approved unanimously as corrected.
3. *Discussion of solarize programs – past, present, & future – including state/federal incentives for residents, businesses, and municipalities, community solar initiatives; possibility of follow-up on pre-pandemic META Grant for Community Shared Solar feasibility study/ Northeast Solar*
 - Update on solar system at Mohawk: ready to go, but needs to be certified by power company (Eversource), which seems to be moving slowly regarding filling out paperwork. The installation should save approximately half the cost of the school's electricity budget. (*Brian, from all-Boards meeting*)
4. *Discussion of local and regional energy-related issues (plus links shared at prior meetings), possibly including:*
 - Rail transport of fossil and other fuels; concerns about derailments, remaining railroad ties and debris along tracks
 - State-proposed energy legislation, including any “woodlands partnership” updates; 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; Lighting Advisory Committee
 - Recycle-able/biodegradable plastic bags; single-use plastics
 - PFAS Testing Program updates
 - Municipal Aggregation: the program seems to be going well; hope to encourage more residents to sign up. (*Brian – from all-Boards meeting*)
 - Brian will get in touch with Heather about putting a blurb in the Buckland newsletter to remind folks about the possibility of switching to Colonial Power & the municipal aggregation program (referring to this EC page on the Buckland website: <https://www.town.buckland.ma.us/energy-committee/pages/municipal-aggregation-opt-opt-out-info>).
 - Minisplit Heat Pumps: There was a suggestion to put a notice up on the EC page about heat pumps and rebates to keep people updated; minisplit heat pumps, whole house systems, and available rebates (*Brian – from all-Boards meeting*)

- LED Streetlights: town has supplied light deflectors in 10 different locations, feedback there good so far; looking to purchase more in case more residents request them (*Brian – from all-Boards meeting*)

5. *Update on past Green Communities Grant applications; planning for 2023-24*

- *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?*
 - Need to check – likely that all paperwork is/will be caught up in time to apply for a grant in a 2024 round.

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

- *Future winsets workshop? Public forum on energy issues?*
- *Fall '23 – Winter '24 film series and/or discussion groups?*
- *Budget for events*
 - Talked about possibility of expanding mission to include focus on climate change. Discussed 27 September “My Turn” in Recorder: *Wake up to our climate emergency and get involved*, by Betsy Corner and Mary Link. A new “Environmental Committee”? Think about possible wording for new mission statement.

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

- Hazard Mitigation Plan – was ad hoc when done most recently (Brian & Margaret attended previously);
- Town exploring switching to having a standing committee: do what preparing we can in advance rather than waiting until something happens then responding spontaneously – possibly monthly meetings – putting out feelers as to who may want to be on it. Potentially called Municipal Vulnerability Committee – there may be a grant from state to help pursue goals that committee advocates (*Brian – from all-Boards meeting*) (Brian with check with Heather for more information.)

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

- Brian attended the All Boards/ Committees Meeting on 21 September. In addition to the topics mentioned in sections above, there was also discussion around zip codes.

9. *Other items not reasonably anticipated*

Mentioned 7 September 2023 Recorder article: *Utilities Plan to Handle More Energy: Permitting reform sought to ease path for new infrastructure*
<https://www.recorder.com/Mass-Utilities-Outline-Plans-To-Handle-More-Electricity-52216555>

10. *Choose facilitator and scribe for next meeting.*

- Next meeting tentatively Wednesday, 25 October at 7:00 via Zoom

11. *Adjourn meeting. 8:30p.m.*