

# Buckland Energy Committee

**Meeting Minutes: 25 October 2023, 7:00 p.m. (held via Zoom)**

**Present:** Committee Members: Michael Novack, Penny Novack, Margaret Olin, Harvey Schaktman (*arrived at 7:20*), Brian Summer; Guests: *None*

**Facilitator:** Michael Novack

**Scribe:** Margaret Olin

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1. *Open the meeting.* (Delayed until 7:20)
2. *Review and approve minutes from 25 September 2023 meeting.*
  - Approved unanimously as written.
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*
  - Reminder about celebration of solar panel installation on MTRHS roof (781 panels!): November 9<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am, MTRHS – RSVP to Carol Foote (see email)
  - Also see #5 below.
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
  - Brian talked to Heather, confirming that residents can still sign up for the Municipal Aggregation plan and will write note to be included in the town newsletter (aim to include updates on programs for mini-split heat pumps, too). Also, put a new tab on EC page of the town website. The link for Municipal Aggregation is already there: <https://www.town.buckland.ma.us/energy-committee/pages/municipal-aggregation-opt-opt-out-info>
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?
  - Margaret attended the 17 October state-wide webinar (via Zoom) about the new Climate Leader Communities program, and shared the link to program info via email to Committee members. She suggested taking a look at the slides & video

from the 17 October webinar to get an overview. (Those links are on the bottom 1/3 of linked page.) Plan to discuss at November meeting.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/climate-leader-communities>

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*
- Perhaps plan a program on the stretch code updates & proposed updates

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

- Brian talked with Heather re possible new committee – potentially called Municipal Vulnerability Committee focusing on MVP & related issues: plans are in the works.

Some ideas:

- they would want at least 1 representative from the Energy Committee to join
- focus on health, conservation . . . will focus more on climate change mitigation in general
- focus on the climate – identifying goals and seeking grants to fund goals
- monthly (or possibly more frequent) meetings

Brian and Margaret will meet with Heather for clarification and more information

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

- None

9. *Other items not reasonably anticipated*

- Discussed Warming Center Survey (17 October email from Town Clerk – excerpt below)

*Shelburne's Emergency Management Director is looking for feedback on the necessity of Warming and Cooling Centers, by way of completing a survey. The [Shelburne Emergency Management Department](#) is administering this survey on behalf of the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional Emergency Management Districts.*

*This survey aims to understand the needs of our community when extreme weather affects Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Hawley, Heath, Plainfield, Rowe and Shelburne. Each question is optional but, the more fully the survey is filled out, the better assessment they can make of the needs.*

Link to survey was included in email, paper copies also available in Town Clerk's office: encouraging all residents to complete. Survey closes on 10 November.

- Noted that the Select Board will call a Special Town Meeting on 27 November (mentioned in 24 October email from Heather).

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

- Next meeting tentatively Wednesday, 15 November at 7:00, via Zoom

11. *Adjourn meeting.* At 8:35p.m.