

Buckland Energy Committee

Meeting Minutes: 28 July 2021, 7:00 p.m. (held via Buckland Zoom account)

Present: Committee Members: Ellen Kaufmann, Michael Novack, Penny Novack, Margaret Olin, Harvey Schaktman, Brian Summer; Guests: Heather Butler, Alyssa Larose

Facilitator: Brian Summer

Scribe: Margaret Olin

1. *Open the meeting.*

2. *Review and approve minutes from 26 May 2021 meeting. (No meeting in June)*

- Approved unanimously as written.

3. *Discussion of solarize programs – past, present, & future – including state/federal incentives for residents, businesses, and municipalities, community solar initiatives; moving forward with awarded META Grant for Community Shared Solar feasibility study and approved proposal from Northeast Solar (still in Phase 1) **Updates with guests Heather Butler and Alyssa LaRose***

- Only one Buckland resident has reported a recent Solar problem (was participant in Solarize Mass Program); Omnidium has been efficiently helping them solve problem– sent the part, and will send person to do the work; Resident is happy with response.

- META Grant for Community Shared Solar feasibility study update: (*discussion with Heather & Alyssa*) Project is still in the works.

- After Tom Kelly (NE Solar), Heather, and BEC toured potential sites, identified potential sites at town highway facility property as the most promising for Community Solar siting. No further action since COVID situation started

- Existing questions about zoning at highway facility property:

- how a Community Solar ground-mounted solar project on municipal land would fit with current zoning ordinances around solar installations;

- looking into any potential wetlands issues. (it's a "wetland protection area", not a wetland: a wetlands decision would be based on submission of a Community Shared Solar plan)

- The payment is not complete for whole process, as there's been no progress beyond site tour.

- Plan to follow-up with NE Solar and META Grant/DOER for information on continuing with project.

4. *Discussion of local and regional energy-related issues, including:*

- MCAP
- 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; regional municipal electricity aggregation

plan reporting from December meeting with CPG

- *MassSave program updates*
- *New Massachusetts programs: (through Mass CEC and DOER; Center for EcoTechnology --CET)*
- *Municipal lighting/streetlights*
- *Recycle-able/biodegradable plastic bags; single-use plastics*
 - CSX still trying to buy Pan Am; not yet approved
- We'll each research current status of energy programs and report back at the next meeting: CET (Ellen), DOER (Penny), CEC (Brian), Green Communities (Harvey), META Action (Michael) Mass Save (Margaret)

5. Update on past Green Communities Grant applications; planning for 2021-22

- *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*
- (Updates with guests Heather Butler and Alyssa LaRose)***
- *DOER updates?*

- Green Communities Grant applications updates: *(discussion with Heather & Alyssa)*

- We've completed and closed out streetlight grant within timeline. Didn't apply for new grant for Spring 2021.

- Now the GCG process is split into 2 rounds: fall and spring; we can potentially have a strong application ready for this fall

- Possibility: apply in fall '21 for hybrid police cruiser grant (up to \$5000 grant toward purchase); Heather asked EC for suggestions on what other projects to include in application, mentioning, for example, new audits in municipal buildings (to help identify new projects), other ADA assessment – related projects

- potentially adding Wastewater Treatment Plant to our Green Communities designation plan (not originally included, so we can't apply for GCG now for projects involving the plant. For that to happen, we would need to update our original plan and upload all the Plant info into the plan. Next, the DOER would need to approve revised plan (upon which we're basing our 20% energy use reduction target– currently we've reached 3% reduction in energy use). UMass Clean Energy Extension had done work with Treatment Plant, although no projects are yet ready to apply for: need to gather more info first – possibly in time for October '21 deadline, or aim for Spring 22

- State encourages applications of regional districts for Green Community designation -- so if we can add the Treatment Plant, maybe we could also add schools.

- Questions:

- How would we coordinate with Shelburne (on Treatment Plant and/or BSE), or the multiple towns in the Mohawk Trail School District:

for example, would we need a new application for the school district, and would a percentage of the energy use be put on Buckland's plan?

-- Can projects overlap ADA-related work and energy conservation work, and what funding may be available?

-- Is it advisable to do a new energy audit (MassSave?) on municipal buildings?

-- Is it possible to combine grants for particular projects? (for example, for Community Solar, GCG can't cover solar PV, but can cover batteries. . but perhaps MVP Action Grant could cover panels?)

-- When will the contracts with FRCOG be such that Alyssa will once more be able to help with these details?

- EC members will think of possible projects to discuss at next meeting

6. Continue discussion of future public events, including:

- *Future winserts workshop? Public forum on energy issues?*
- *Fall/Winter 2021-22 film series and/or discussion groups;*
- *budget for events*

- Plan discussion on possibilities for events at next meeting, based on the state programs we'll be researching

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

- Not discussed

8. Discussion of meeting format after state lifts emergency

- Zoom town committee meetings okayed through April 2022

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

- None

10. Other items not reasonably anticipated

- Plastics and dam: Brian will find out what committees may be interested in holding joint public meeting concerning this issue.

11. Choose facilitator and scribe for next meeting.

- Next meeting potentially 18 or 25 August

11. Adjourn meeting