

MINUTES  
ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE  
January 21, 2021  
Held via Zoom

Meeting called to order: 7:20 pm

Attending: Andrea Chasen, Dave Marinelli, David Miller, David Morse, Steve Marantz, Mino Tehrani, and Kevin Shea, absent: Liz Bone

Quests: Lyn Simmons. Bob Ackley (Gas Safety), Chief John Dearborn, Mark Rabinsky (Green Communities coordinator)

1 Opening of .Meeting: Andrea read the open meeting law pursuant to Gov. Baker's guidelines during the pandemic emergency declaration.

2. Discussion of minutes from December 3, 2020: Correction to the minutes as to the date of the January meeting: Motion to accept corrected minutes from Dec. 3, 2020 made by Dave Miller and seconded by Mino Tehrani: unanimously passed.

3. Presentation of air quality monitoring assessment by Gas Safety: Bob Ackley presented his findings from his December assessment:

Mr. Ackley's findings:

Areas checked were the Wolf Swamp, Glenbrook, the river area, Springfield border, and around the Longmeadow Country Club. The purpose of the study is to help Longmeadow develop a baseline of information about its air quality: this will be important if plans to expand current gas infrastructure is built; particularly in regard to the development of gas facilities at Longmeadow Country Club and throughout the town. Mr. Ackley's assessment focused on the production of methane gas along existing gas lines. His conclusions are that, at present, there are no areas of excessive gas leaks or gas producing factories.

Observations and questions based on the report:

Mino Tehrani noticed there is tree damaged from gas leaks. Mr. Ackley confirmed that the trees are damaged by the increased presence of methane in the air and that the gas company is required to keep track of this information.

Dave Morse: Is the equipment used by Mr. Ackley the same as the equipment used by the gas company? No, he uses a machine 10000x sensitive.

Kevin Shea: Is there any additional information that Mr. Ackley can provide in his assessments? Mr. Ackley's equipment can also be used to assess the amount of carbon dioxide gas as well.

Andrea Chasen: Is there anything that Longmeadow should be worried about? Not right now.

Steve Marantz made a motion for the Committee to go to the Select Board and request for another \$3000 to continue gas assessment for Longmeadow for the 2021 year.

Motion seconded by Kevin Shea: 2nd motion. Passed: In favor: David Miller, Kevin Shea, Steve Marantz, Andrea Chasen, Minoos Tehrani, and David Morse; opposed: none, abstention: Dave Marinelli

*Both Bob Ackley and Chief Dearborn left the meeting.*

#### 4. Green Communities update:

Mark Rabinsky provided an update on Green Communities grants and offered information and suggestions to help Longmeadow continue to reduce its fossil fuel use. Longmeadow has closed out our grant for the year.

There will be two new competitive grant cycles this year: the first application will be due on April 2. The second cycle for applications will be in October. The number of communities applying for and receiving grants has been and it is now 271. Grant announcements have not been released yet.

Longmeadow can only be given grant funds for one of the cycles this year and Mark recommends bundling as much into a grant application as possible. Green communities money can't be used to purchase solar panels: the focus of the grants to help communities reduce total usage of energy. Mark recommends looking at the town's schools to continue reducing energy use. Such things as weather stripping, hot water heaters, window inserts, etc., audits to find the best ways to reduce energy use by a minimum of 20%.

Information about the town's current use of energy is supplied by the utility companies and uploaded to MEI (Mass Energy Insite-) Website that the town uses to upload all energy usage.

Lyn can receive a link to the website and share this with the committee to help committee members better advise the town as to areas that still need to have energy use reductions.

Questions and comments:

Andrea asked about our designation grant. Is it taken into account that we haven't asked for a significant amount yet? A: *the awards do take into consideration how much a community has already received.*

Minoos asked if gas used for cooking at the schools is something to consider. A: *Cooking may contribute a small portion to the overall gas use; but it's primarily the heating of buildings that uses the most gas.*

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Andrea observed that it seems like we've done a lot for the schools to reduce energy, primary air seal and insulate, a year ago. But the current information provided in the MEI doesn't seem to reflect any of that work. Why? A: *Mark said he would like to see what the Gas Company estimated for the energy savings before they did the work on the buildings.*

Should the buildings do another energy audit? Nick Georgantis and Lyn have been working on getting more audits done. Need town staff to work on it, but Andrea offered our help. Work is ongoing though.

Mark noticed the town still using oil for some buildings, the DPW and DPW garage which will come off the grid soon as the new building is ready.

The new DPW building is heated with gas.

Minoo- Massachusetts and Switzerland signed a climate pact. Switzerland is using a new solar energy panel that moves with the sun, absorbs more sun power, and stores the energy. Hopefully we can leapfrog the technology to get moving on energy efficient technology like Europe.

*Lyn Simmons left the meeting and Mark Rabinsky left the meeting.*

5. Review of Committee's Annual Report to be submitted to the town by February 12. The committee decided that the report looks good and can now be submitted to the town.

Letter to Eversource has been reviewed by the committee and will be sent out in the next few days.

6. New Business for next month: these matters will be on the agenda for next month's meeting.

- Steve Marantz- Our committee has \$50000 to match a grant. The Senior Center can put up funds for solar panels and we can give our \$50000 to match. Steve will talk with Lyn.
- Solar Array report from Lyn.
- Earth Day cleanup. April.
- Habitat for Humanity- Dave Marinelli- Can we partner with HOH for any updates or new buildings and advise about the passive home and stretch code? Invite parties to next meeting to discuss how we can help.

Next meeting date- Feb 11, 2021- 7:15pm

Adjourn: 8:45 pm

Motion to adjourn: Dave Miller, 2nd Dave Marinelli. All in favor.

Respectfully, Liz Bone