

The Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee met remotely via Zoom at 7:00 pm on Monday, July 15, 2024.

The following members and staff were present:

Ellen Menounos (Co-Chair), Jeanne Trubek (Co-Chair), Silas Fyler (Energy Manager), Laurel Schwab (Sustainability Manager), Lauri Murphy, Brian Hebeisen, Pat Rathbone, Marcia Ciro

Absent: None.

Others present: Steve Steadman, Pam Phillips, Larry Raskin

The meeting started with a quorum at 7:00 pm with Jeanne Trubek presiding.

1. Announcements

- The next meeting of WE3C will be 8/19/24 at 7 pm on Zoom.
- We will try using the Zoom AI Companion and Zoom transcripts for help with writing the minutes.

2. Vote: Minutes from 6/17/24 were approved unanimously with minor edits.

3. Energy Manager Report (Silas Fyler)

- For the state's Climate Leader Communities program, the next piece is a decarbonization plan for municipal buildings and vehicles. The baseline is 2022 data. The goal is for the city to be NetZero by 2050. This program is the next generation of Green Communities in MA.
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/climate-leader-communities>
- EV chargers are planned for the police and fire station.

4. Sustainability Manager Report (Laurel Schwab)

- The Miyawaki Forest team will hold a community engagement event at the library on Aug 3.
- Watertown has hired a new Senior Planner for Economic Development, Erin Rathe.
- The Watertown Sustainability Office will soon have 4 people:
 - Laurel, Sustainability Manager
 - Katie Swan, Conservation Agent
 - A full time Energy Advocate (to be hired)
 - A full time Sustainability Planner (to be hired)
- The roles have been kept general to allow for flexibility as the team grows.
- Mass Save, in partnership with the City, will offer free energy assessments to small businesses, nonprofits, and churches to facilitate energy efficiency upgrades. (Mass Save has a Community First Partnership which provides grants to municipalities.) (Eversource 'Main Streets Project' is a small business energy efficiency initiative.)

5. Discussion/summary of recent Watertown Dam meeting

- Lauri Murphy attended a recent meeting about the removal of the Watertown dam. It was a technical discussion touching on soils, legacy pollutants, and wildlife.
- A study will be happening in the fall. The Conservation Commission would have to issue a wetlands permit for the work to take place.

6. Discussion/summary of recent Alexandria Real Estate (ARE) meeting on Watertown mall redevelopment

- Comments on this development and lab development in general:
 - ARE has done very little/nothing to reduce the increased number of vehicles that the mall redevelopment project would generate.
 - Labs do not create many jobs
 - May not be possible for labs to hit NetZero; a more appropriate ask would be for them to come as close as they can. Labs have very high energy use, even if they maximize solar, they would probably only get 20% of their energy needs met from solar. Energy efficiency measures can have more of an impact.
- WE3C should review and approve a set of boilerplate questions for developers, to better align with the goals of the Climate and Energy Plan. E.g., WE3C members have pushed for LEED platinum building standards in the past.

- Laurel and Silas regularly encourage developers to meet and exceed energy standards
- Faire on the Square table could feature a new document on this topic, and WE3C web page could use an update.

7. Other updates

- The committee voted to invite Drew Rollert from Wada Hoppah (<https://wadahoppah.com/about-us-1>) to a future WE3C meeting. Members have questions about landing and staging, about cost and funding.
- Other prospective future meeting guests include:
 - Julie Janiski from Buro Happold/Alexandria Real Estate
 - Vincent Ragucci, III re municipal EV programs, <https://ene.org/ene-drives-electric/>

8. Vote: Motion to adjourn at 8:30 approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Menounos