

WE3C Minutes 9/29/14 meeting, 7:00 p.m., Lower Meeting Room, Town Hall

Present: Ken Mirvis, chair, Stephane Acel-Green, co-chair, Lauri Murphy, Brian Hebeisen, Matt Riegert, Meredith Fields; guests: Councilors Susan Falkoff and Aaron Dushku; NSL (Next Step Living) liaison Malcolm Bliss

Absent: Terese Hammerle, Greg Beach

1. Minutes 7/21/14 meeting approved.

2. Incentives for increasing renewable energy use, including solar and energy-efficient building practices: discussion of current and future development in town and need for attention now. Susan noted Cambridge LEED building mandate was the result of a task force involving many stakeholders. Aaron suggested multidisciplinary review of zoning ordinances. Brian suggested incentives for new buildings through trade-offs involving renewable energy usage. There was discussion of need for attention to town Comprehensive Plan as well as attention to fast-track options. Susan suggested committee review draft Energy chapter (Ch. 9) of town Comprehensive Plan in anticipation of upcoming review/edit meeting scheduled for 10/9, also supported considering convening a task force to look at zoning ordinances. Ken noted solar successes in Germany and Vermont; Brian noted economics make sense re costs with solar. Susan and Aaron suggested discussion with Steve Magoon (Director of Community Development and Planning) and possible town council resolution in support of solar. WE3C members (Ken, Stephane, Lauri, Brian, Meredith) will meet informally Thurs 10/2 to review the draft Energy chapter of Comprehensive Plan in anticipation of 10/9 meeting.

3. Solarize Watertown: Matt noted still need to spend \$2000 grant from CEC, proposal has been approved to use \$1000 for public celebration of solar installations in Watertown and to encourage further installations, \$1000 for workshop with teachers in schools to develop renewable energy education. Plan for holding celebration was discussed, to be scheduled for sometime in spring 2015. Ken and Matt will contact schools re initial meeting to gauge interest among teachers for workshop.

4. Home weatherizations: Malcolm noted 10% of households in the Greater Boston area have been assessed, 90% remain; outreach efforts in Watertown continue. He reported a lot of interest at Faire on the Square, and information tables continue at DMV, Stop & Shop. He noted staffing is available if other venues for information tables are identified; suggestions included several local retail shops, restaurants, athletic events and school events. Committee supported continued use of WISE logo. There was discussion of complaints regarding NSL in town. Malcolm reported customer satisfaction for NSL was 97% (would recommend to family or friends) and NSL has "A" rating from Better Business Bureau, NSL is committed to following up and addressing all

complaints.

5. Solar canopy grant: Ken reported he and Steve Magoon have submitted grant proposal to CEC to work with Cadmus, awaiting response.

6. Storm water: Ken and Nancy Hammett of Storm Water Committee to co-ordinate re organizing meeting on river contamination.

7. Plastic bags: Ken noted town ban on single-use plastic bags is under discussion. Committee is in support of a ban. Brian will draft a letter of support.

8. Clean Energy Strategies: Stephane noted need to inform community of results of CES meetings last year, invite the public and people who attended. Discussion of timing for such a meeting, will await CEC grant and perhaps Comprehensive Plan.

9. Discussion of items raised by Meredith to consider as part of this year's agenda:

a. Victory Field Part 2: consider committee input regarding environmental concerns and impacts.

b. Town planning: explore ways to increase committee input in planning process either directly or through liaison to town energy manager (when in place) and town engineer.

c. Divestment: consider exploring options for town divestment although primarily a state issue. Malcolm noted MCAN leader on divestment is Darcy Dumont, will forward contact info.

d. Community preparation for severe storm/weather-related catastrophes: MCAN (MA Climate Action Network) holding conference in November on this. Ken noted need for a WE3C liaison to attend MCAN meetings, report back.

e. Environmental health and resilience: greater habitat resilience through biodiversity and use of native plants and trees is important as well as avoiding chemicals and monoculture. Consider community action/education, co-ordination with Trees for Watertown, Community Gardens.

f. Incentives for landlords to weatherize: continue exploring.

g. Waste-stream energy use to generate gas/electricity: continue to explore regional or town opportunities for digester. Brian knows contact person at CEC.

h. Expand stretch code: explore options and make recommendations after review of zoning ordinances as discussed in item 2 (above).

10. WE3C chairmanship: Ken announced that after more than 6 years as chair he is thinking it is time to step down soon, no date yet set. Further discussion next meeting of chairmanship and need for new members for committee.

Next meeting: Oct 20, 7 p.m.

Future meeting dates: 2014: Nov 17, Dec 15. 2015: Jan 12, Feb 9, Mar 23, Apr 13, May 18, June 15, July 13.

Respectfully submitted,
Meredith Fields