Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee
Meeting Minutes May 15, 2017

OPENING:

The May 15, 2017 meeting of *Watertown's Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee* (WE3C) was opened by Chair Meredith Fields at 7:05pm in Town Hall's third floor conference room.

ATTENDANCE:

Committee Members & Guests (in alphabetical order)
Andrew Airasian
Meredith Fields - Chair
Brian Hebeisen
Lauri Murphy
Helen Soussou
Jeanne Trubek
Watertown Staff Liaison
Edward Lewis – Energy Manager
Guest Speakers

AGENDA:

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Discussion / prioritization of potential WE3C projects
3. Energy Manager Report
4. New Business
5. Approval of Meeting Minutes

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1) Welcome and introductions:

In attendance were several long term WE3C members, along with residents who have expressed an interest in the Committee.

2) Discussion / prioritization of potential WE3C projects, including:

A compilation of potential projects and areas of interest the WE3C could engage on was culled from the last several meetings and presented. This is part of an on-going process to determine high gain / high interest areas for the committee to focus on.

It was determined that forming working groups to collect information and report back to the full committee for deliberation / decision making / committee action would be the most effective method for the Committee to have maximum impact.

One working group was formed and members present volunteered in other areas of interest, these areas will be reviewed in upcoming meetings to form working groups with other members / residents with similar interests.

The potential projects / areas of interest follow *(in italics)* along with committee discussion points.

1. *Community Choice Aggregation: WE3C would recommend to town council that Watertown pursue a change of residential electricity supplier to increase the proportion of electricity produced from renewable resources (and thus encourage development of green energy sources in New England and the northeast), with opt-out available to all purchasers who wish to remain with Eversource as supplier.*

Most of the committee's discussion revolved around Community Choice Aggregation.

It was noted that the *Watertown Tab* had recently run an article on Melrose's Community Choice Aggregation program (link to *WickedLocal* article follows) and this may help drive community interest.

http://watertown.wickedlocal.com/news/20170509/towns-ditch-standard-electric-service-to-embrace-green-power

The Committee unanimously voted to support and recommend Community Choice Aggregation for the Town. One of the initial steps will be to seek permission from the Town Council to investigate moving forward.

A working group (Andrew Airasian, Brian Hebeisen, Lauri Murphy and Helen Soussou) was formed to lead this effort.

2. Public education: Include educational efforts regarding environment and energy efficiency through public events and presentations, schools, Senior Center, etc., as well as getting word out about what the town has accomplished in energy efficiency savings ($$$) and reduction of CO2 emissions (14% since 2010 in town buildings and operations, more goals to meet ahead). Encourage information sharing regarding private initiatives such as Neighborhood Solar.

In April the Committee hosted guest speakers from Neighborhood Solar and is supportive of the program.

It was noted the WE3C Committee has cross links with the Climate Action working group of the Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice and the Environment group. It is believed there are many opportunities for the two groups to work concurrently on sustainability / energy use reduction issues and having communication between the two groups will be helpful.

Jeanne Trubek and Meredith Fields have been attending the Climate Action working groups meetings and can help to keep the WE3C up to date.

3. *Town design standards and guidelines / Microclimate mitigation: Monitor how implementation is going, suggest and advocate for improvements re buildings and green space design regarding environmental considerations and energy efficiency. Make recommendations for decreasing city heat-island effects through shade trees, white or light-colored roofs and green roofs, light-color parking lots, attention to park and garden design, tree selection for withstanding climate change.*

Please note - it was suggested to combine the two related topics (#3 & #4) into one topic - combined here into #3 and the rest of the topics were renumbered to follow.

It was noted the Town has done significant work on Sustainable Design thru the Design Standards and Guidelines, in addition to utilizing the Stretch Energy Code required under our Green Communities designation.

4. *Renewable energy resources: Inventory local and regional resources, practicalities in developing anaerobic digester capacity, geothermal, large-scale regional solar (Community Shared Solar) and wind installations.*

Andrew Airasian has interest in working on this topic.

5. *Infrastructure hardening: Make recommendations for anticipation/management of increased intensity of storms, droughts, heat waves, cold snaps, flooding, runoff and erosion, eventual sea level rise impact moving inland from Boston. Explore local weather-related disaster preparation, public buildings as refuges.*

6. *Transportation: Co-ordinate with current traffic planning to decrease emissions including advocate for increased public transportation accessibility and efficiency (including local public transportation using electric vans), increased safety and accessibility of bike routes/paths, increased use of roundabouts for increased efficiency of traffic flow, encourage use of electric vehicles, increase availability of charging stations.*

Jeanne Trubek has strong interest in working on the transportation area. She related an example of LL Bean sponsoring complementary rides in electric mini-busses around Mount Desert Island in Maine to reduce congestion and emissions as a potential 'best practice' to explore.

Ms. Trubek is also looking into other Town committees that may be relevant, Bike/Ped, Traffic.

7. *Recycling, refuse, composting: Inventory current status and efforts, consider options to use yard waste and food waste for energy generation, compost availability for parks and gardens to decrease use of fertilizer.*

Curbside pick-up of compostable material was discussed – it is believed that Natick has recently instituted a program for this. Discussed the schools as a potential high gain area to look at compostable materials, including non-Styrofoam lunch trays.

8. *Legislative initiatives/processes: Watch legislative news, advocate for environmental and energy efficiency initiatives that impact Watertown and surround.*

Lauri Murphy enthusiastically looks forward to working in this area.

9. *Outreach to schools: Educational opportunities, ideas for involving schools and kids in projects, encouraging environmental impact awareness in school budgeting and choices (e.g. Styrofoam lunch trays), energy efficiency of current and future school facilities.*

Could be a target for compostable evaluation.

10. *Other suggestions:*

Natural Gas leaks – the committee discussed addressing natural gas leaks potentially from both a legislative and a town centric focus. Andrew Airasian and Jeanne Trubek have interest in this area.

Continue to search for additional grant opportunities for sustainability purposes.

3) Energy Manager Report:

- LED Streetlight Retrofit Project Update
  a. Mount Auburn Street (electric trolley line) completed Sunday, April 23rd
  b. Project complete by end of FY 17
  c. Will save over $105,000 per year in electrical and maintenance costs
  d. Reduces Watertown's carbon footprint by 332 tons CO2e per year

- Senior Center "Lunch and Learn" Outreach update
  a. Well received, many questions on home energy audits, solar array installation and alternative electricity suppliers – reviewed town sustainability efforts, Mass Save audit options and Neighborhood Solar options.

- Arbor Day / Earth Day at the Mansion
  a. Energy Manager had information booth for Town Energy reduction activities and energy reduction resources available to residents.

- Discussion on estimated GHG reduction per % of green energy Watertown utilizes
  a. Each 1% increase in green power supplied to Watertown households reduces our carbon footprint by 346 metric tons per year – so at MAPC recommended 5% => 1,730 tons CO2e reduction per year
  b. Ed to distribute rough calculations to group

4) New Business / Community update:

There will be an informational session regarding Neighborhood Solar at the Watertown Public Library on Thursday, June 1st at 7:00pm in the Watertown Savings Bank meeting room.

http://www.neighborhoodsolar.org/

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Minutes from the April 24th, 2017 WE3C meeting were approved.

It was suggested to send out an e-mail reminder for future WE3C meetings, perhaps include an outlook calendar link to facilitate adding to people's calendars. Requesting an RSVP was also suggested.

5) <u>Scheduled WE3C Meetings:</u>

Unless otherwise noted meetings are held 7:00PM the third Monday of the month in the Town Hall 3rd floor conference room.

June 19th – 7:00PM

July 17th – 7:00PM

September 18th – 7:00PM

The public is welcome at all meetings.

<u>Adjournment</u>: The meeting was adjourned at 8:35pm.

Minutes submitted by: Edward Lewis, May 18, 2017