Minutes WE3C meeting 6/30/14, 7:00 p.m., Lower Meeting Room, Town Hall

Present: Ken Mirvis, chair, Stephane Acel-Green, co-chair, Brian Hebeisen, Meredith Fields; guest: Councilor Aaron Dushku

Absent: Matt Riegert, Terese Hammerle, Lauri Murphy, Greg Beach

1. Minutes 5/19/14 meeting approved.

2. Solarize Watertown sign-up period ends today for participation in group-purchase of photovoltaic solar installations on homes and businesses. Tier 4 pricing reached, giving additional savings to participants. Matt's work on this project greatly appreciated!

3. Grant to hire Energy Manager for town obtained, provides $50,000 toward first year and $25,000 second year. Ken reported Steve Magoon is working on details of job description, to be discussed at DPW subcommittee meeting on 7/1. Hope is for hiring 9/1.

4. Green Communities grant application to complete streetlight conversions to LED has been submitted.

5. CEC grant of $25,000 for consultation on clean energy project continues under discussion. Ken reported CEC recommended we not pursue study of developing incentives for weatherization and energy efficiency of rental properties in town because it seemed "too big" a project for this grant. Ken has looked into alternative project discussed previously by the committee of making thermal imaging data known and available to homeowners and rental property owners for weatherization purposes. Another option would be an initiative with the schools to integrate energy and environmental education into the curriculum. Decision is to pursue thermal imaging data project. Ken will discuss with CEC.

6. Outreach to town council for increased communication about WE3C projects and recommendations discussed. Possibilities include update in fall to town council and all committees relevant to environment/energy including DPW subcommittee, Stormwater committee; annual or biannual presentations to town council; invitations for councilors to attend WE3C meetings individually as Aaron is doing with this meeting. Further discussion at next meeting.

7. Discussion of topics raised by Aaron:

a. Initiative to reduce plastics use is underway by Rethink Plastics group who will present recommendations to council regarding plastic bottles, bags, Styrofoam. Brian will draft statement of support from WE3C.

b. River pollution including E. Coli spikes and nutrient pollution from nitrogen and phosphorus runoff are on-going concerns. Aaron has requested information on nutrient pollution. Ken reviewed discussions over past several months of E.

Coli findings from Charles River Watershed Association. Town engineer is starting work. Ken suggested convening all parties (engineer, DPW, Stormwater Committee, CWRA, WE3C, co-ordinate with Newton, etc) in September for a "summit meeting," on how to approach the problem of contamination spikes. Nutrient runoff issue could be added to agenda.

c. Rooftop solar for more town buildings discussed. Committee supports pursuing presentation to town council re school roofs. Skating rink roof is not feasible for solar regarding cost, alternative of a white roof to reduce heating and cooling costs was discussed. Discussion of possible need for official town policy that all roofs of town buildings be made solar-ready when roofs are being replaced.

d. Solar for new building in town discussed including education re costs, payback, possible mandates and incentives. Stephane suggested researching other towns' approaches to incentives, education re costs. He and Brian will pursue.

e. Public transportation improvements being pursued by Sustainable Watertown group. Aaron reported they met with Bev Scott from the T and she will come back for a follow-up meeting in Sept. Topics include pursuing traffic alleviation strategies, signal prioritizing for buses, Charlie Card streamlining, electric buses rather than diesel.

f. Hubway and Zip Car, etc, stations discussed. There is need for research and education regarding costs, efficiency, ease of use in Watertown and what may meet our particular needs and circumstances.

8. Next meeting July 21, 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Meredith Fields