

Minutes: Town of Watertown Environment & Energy Efficiency Committee
(WE3C),
April 22, 2019, 7 p.m., 3rd Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall

Minutes

The meeting was opened at 7:05 p.m., chaired by Meredith Fields. Introductions were made. Attending members and citizens: Ed Lewis (Town Energy Manager), Jeanne Trubek, Helen Soussou, Brian Hebeisen, Emma Clement, Stephen Steadman, Libby Shaw, and Andrew Airasian.

7:06 approved amended meeting minutes from February as well as March meeting minutes.

Announcements

- Thursday 4/25 Arbor Day event at Commander's Mansion in Arsenal Park
- Stormwater Advisory Committee Thursday 4/25, 7 p.m.
- Charles River cleanup event Saturday morning 4/27, 9-12 in Stop & Shop parking lot
- Mass Climate Action Network annual local environmental action meeting Saturday 4/27 at Worcester State, participants can register online
- Watertown Faces Climate Change (WFCC) meeting Sunday 4/28 at 4:15 p.m. at the Residence
- School Building Committee meeting Thursday 4/25 at 6 p.m. in Council Chambers (to be preceded by Sustainability Subcommittee meeting at 5 p.m.)
- Next WE3C meeting will be Monday 5/20

7:12 Energy Manager's Report

- Green Community grants are still in progress, specifically LED retrofit projects at Saltonstall Park and the Library
- Ed working w/ Community Development & Planning committee on Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) planning grant, and potential funding sources for the Greenhouse Gas Inventory
- Ed recently presented at a meeting at First Parish in Cambridge on the topic of Watertown's solar ordinance
- Ed will be attending a roundtable with Congresswoman Clark on sustainable infrastructure
- Watertown's application for installation of subsidized EV charging stations has been acknowledged by Eversource, and is undergoing engineering evaluation

- The Town's two new EV Leafs are being lettered, will probably be used for Assessor's Office and the Senior Center

7:22 Watertown Electricity Choice (WEC) Update

- Peregrine has received conditional DPU approval of Watertown's plan
- WEC Working Group will be starting meetings with Peregrine to prepare for program launch

7:28 MVP Grant Discussion

- In January, Town Council approved the development of a Watertown Climate and Energy Master Plan (WCEMP) addendum to town's Master Plan
- Funding is available to support MVP planning as part of the WCEMP, grant application due 5/1
- Discussion of a draft letter of support for the grant application, from WE3C and addressed to Secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs [See below for letter]
- 7:38 unanimously approved draft letter

7:39 Discussion of WE3C Co-chair appointment

- Historically, WE3C has had a co-chair, position has not been filled in some time
- Any official members of the committee are eligible for this position
- nomination of Andrew Airasian as co-chair, no further nominees
- 7:43 appointment as co-chair passed unanimously

7:45 Review of Trees & Climate Change event

- General consensus that turnout was higher than expected, and it would have been advantageous to have media present
- Discussion of recent Cambridge moratorium on felling trees on public and private property
- Watertown's stormwater ordinances don't refer to the benefits of trees on managing stormwater
- Discussion of estimating the monetary value of individual trees, some estimates are available as tools from i-Tree (<https://www.itreetools.org/>)
- Discussion of incentivizing towns to monetize the value of private/public trees to encourage more planting and appropriate maintenance

8:11 Working Group updates

School Building Committee working group:

- Preliminary LEED scoring for the designs for Hosmer and Cunniff schools indicate that, according to the architects, Silver level is achievable, and Gold may be a possibility
- Discussions of the Net Zero goal for the school renovations/new construction is ongoing
- It will be vital to continue to publicly support energy-efficient design for the school projects and maintain vigilance
- Discussion of drafting a letter of support from WE3C to the School Building Committee to thank them for their support and encourage continued commitment to efficiency and environmental considerations

Transportation working group:

- Transportation and Climate Initiative of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States (TCI) will hold a Technical Workshop at the Boston Public Library on Regional Cap and Invest for Transportation on 4/30 (8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.) (<https://www.transportationandclimate.org/>)
- Jeanne has contacted her state representative in support of a bill for funding regional transportation outside of the major urban areas

Property Assessed Clean Energy Working Group:

- Recommendation to start by meeting with town Assessor and Treasurer/Collector, and try to identify more residents interested in participating in the program

Composting working group and Gas Leaks working group updates tabled to next meeting

8:30 Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted,
A. Airasian

[Scan of approved letter to Sec Beaton]



TOWN OF WATERTOWN
Environment & Energy Efficiency Committee

Meredith Fields, chair
Andrew Airasian
Emma Clement
Brian Hebeisen

Edward Lewis, Town Energy Manager
Lauri Murphy
Sean O'Hern
Jeanne Trubek

April 22, 2019

Matthew A. Beaton, Secretary
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Secretary Beaton,

The Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee (WE3C) was founded in 2003 with the mission to advise the Town Council on matters related to the environment and energy efficiency and to provide information to the public regarding these. The committee is made up of citizen volunteers appointed by the Town, and the Town Energy Manager.

In the course of its work, the committee has recommended and assisted in the town becoming a Green Community, has helped to establish the position of Town Energy Manager, and has recommended strategies to reduce municipal energy usage such that the town is on track to meet its goal of a 20% reduction in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 relative to 2010 levels. In addition, the committee has been active in multiple town initiatives and projects to promote sustainability in the private sector as well as the public one. The committee works actively with other town committees and local volunteer organizations in promoting shared goals.

The members of WE3C support the Town's application for a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) planning grant, and commit to active participation in the planning process for municipal preparedness.

Along with MVP planning, the WE3C is working with the Town to develop a Climate and Energy Master Plan for Watertown. The proposal (attached) for such a Plan was approved by Town Council in January 2019, and is consistent with the recommendations of the Watertown Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2015.

It is clear from projections that Watertown as a community will be increasingly affected by climate change. Local impacts are predicted to include rising temperatures with prolonged heat waves, more storms and more flooding from increased precipitation. Temperature effects are and will be intensified by microclimate effects due to Watertown's built environment and limited tree canopy. Flooding and erosion effects are and will be intensified by Watertown's significant areas of impermeable surfaces. The severity of effects will be significantly influenced by local, regional, national and international mitigation efforts, especially in the longer term. Watertown has a moral imperative to address its contribution to climate change, while also planning for its impact.

Thank you for your consideration of Watertown's application. We reiterate our commitment to working with the Town on this plan and on its execution.

Sincerely,

Meredith Fields. Chair