

The Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee met remotely via Zoom at 7:00 PM on Monday, March 21, 2022.

The meeting started with a quorum at 7:05.

Members present: Jeanne Trubek, Ellen Menounos, Pat Rathbone, Brian Hebeisen, Meredith Fields, Lauri Murphy. Staff present: Laurel Schwab, Ed Lewis. Others present: Susan LaDue, Steve Steadman, Connie Henry, Fred Cloonan, Susan Flint, Janet Jameson, and City Councilor John Gannon joined at 8:30.

1. Decision – Vote to approve of minutes of 2/28/2022 meeting.

☐ Motion – Lauri; Second – Pat; All in favor – all ayes; All opposed – none.

2. Announcements

☐ Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice and the Environment is having its annual meeting in May. The guest speakers are Laurel Schwab and Ed Lewis, to discuss the Climate Action Plan.

☐ Pat – There is a hunger strike planned to oppose the Peabody peaker plant (fossil fuel power plant.) Find out more at #fastingforafuture, #StopPeabodyPeaker.

3. Energy Manager Report (Ed Lewis)

☐ Feedback on the Climate and Energy Master Plan has been good.

☐ NetZero equipment at the new Cunniff School has been challenging, this comes with the territory of being one of the first NetZero schools

☐ A contractor has been chosen for the Lowell School, and work will begin soon.

☐ Ed has been working with DPW to add more EV (electric vehicle) charging stations around town. Potential locations include Wells Ave municipal parking lot in Coolidge Square and CVS parking lot in Watertown Square. Ed has been writing grants for these additional EV stations.

☐ Jeanne asked for an update on Watertown Electricity Choice (WEC). Ed said there have been more inquiries lately, since Eversource rates are currently high. Jeanne made the point that summer will bring new electricity rates. Brian suggested we run a timely publicity drive for WEC. Brian, Jeanne, Lauri, Deb Peterson, and Ellen will work on how to promote WEC.

4. Environmental Planner Report (Laurel Schwab)

☐ Charles River Watershed Association will advocate for dam removal at the April 6, 7:00 pm Con Com meeting.

☐ A pilot program for organics recycling is being discussed, emphasizing low cost and removing barriers to entry. Composting is also possible in schools—new school kitchens have been built with capacity for composting.

5. Climate Plan Report (Laurel Schwab)

☐ Climate and Energy Master Plan should be finalized by the end of the month. From there, the Plan will start the council review process, and hopefully City Council can take it up before their budget discussions become time-consuming later this spring.

6. Discussion of working groups—status reports and members

☐ Watertown Electricity Choice—Ed, Brian, Lauri, Deb Peterson

☐ Net Zero—Brian, Pat, Ernesta K, Jolly T

☐ Ordinances—Meredith, and for Tree Ordinance specifically, Steve, Ellen, Trees for Watertown (David Meshoulam, Libby Shaw, Jim Briand.) The people in this group will vary depending on the ordinance being worked on.

- ☐ Outreach to Schools—Ellen, Ed, Meredith, Connie Henry
- ☐ School Buildings—on hiatus
- ☐ Transportation—Jeanne, Brian, Deborah Peterson, Ernesta Krackiewicz, Janet Jameson, Dan McKinley
- ☐ Resources—no longer active

Discussion: Which ordinances are included in the Climate and Energy Master Plan? BEUDO, Trees, Solar. Which are not included?

Other ordinances that WE3C has worked on in the past were not included in the draft climate plan (small off-road internal combustion engines, noise, or synthetic turf). The group discussed reasons why these other ordinances were not included:

Brian—Those other ordinances have less potential for limiting climate change impacts in the next 1-2 years. Meredith—The other ordinances would have climate impact, and they are essential for public/environmental health.

Discussion: With the climate plan coming out soon, many agreed that this is a good time to rethink the working groups. Dormant working groups do not necessarily need to be revived. To what extent should working groups align with the proposed ordinances in the climate plan?

Brian—perhaps the Ordinances working group could be used for policies that are *not* part of the climate plan. Meredith—it is not realistic for WE3C volunteer members to write these ordinances, it is too much work. Laurel—as we move from climate plan creation to implementation, staff will be able to help more.

Our next meeting will be in 5 weeks on Monday April 25, 2022.

Tree ordinance update from Meredith—the working group will spend the next 1-2 months collecting input by way of conversations with individuals. The final draft will be voted on by WE3C before it is sent to City Council.

7. Introduction of our guest, City Councilor John Gannon.

Councilor Gannon informed us that \$12-13 million will be allocated for Watertown via ARPA funds. Some is going to schools. There are discussions happening now about how best to use this 1-time funding. Councilor Gannon has a long history of advocating for open space, trails, and trail connections in Watertown. He served on Watertown Zoning Board for 10 years. He has worked as a municipal attorney for many years. He has also practiced environmental law such as wetlands protection.

8. Adjourn

- ☐ All in favor