

The Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee met remotely via Zoom at 7:00 PM on Monday, April 25, 2022.

The following members and staff were present:

Ed Lewis, Energy Manager. Laurel Schwab, Sr Environmental Planner. Jeanne Trubek, Chair.
Ellen Menounos, Pat Rathbone, Brian Hebeisen, Meredith Fields, Lauri Murphy

Others present: City Councilor Caroline Bays, Ernesta Krackiewicz, Steve Steadman, Carina Wallack.

The meeting started with a quorum at 7:00.

1) Announcements

On May 15, Watertown Citizens For Peace Justice & Environment will have their annual meeting and potluck dinner. Special guests Laurel Schwab and Ed Lewis will present about the new Climate Plan.

There is a meeting Wednesday where the finalists for City Manager will be announced.

2) Decision--Approve minutes from the last meeting.

Motion—Ed. Second—Brian. All in favor? Ayes. All opposed? None.

3) Energy Manager Report (Ed Lewis)

Climate Bill.

A large \$250 million climate bill has made it through the Massachusetts Senate. Some highlights:

- An EV rebate is up to \$3,500 (from \$2,500.)
- Includes \$50 million to build out EV chargers across the state.
- Sale of new internal combustion engine cars will be banned by 2035.
- MBTA buses all electric after 2028.
- Big investment in offshore wind.
- Residential net metering limit for solar will be raised.
- Replace SMART.

Schools.

Exploring technologies for the new high school:

- New heat exchanger.
- Closed loop geothermal system. Test drilling 1000' down.
- Building Integrated Photovoltaics.
- Aiming for a NetZero design and LEED platinum.

Groundbreaking at the Lowell on Wednesday. New Lowell School will achieve 48% on site solar, as a result of a redesign.

4) Environmental Planner Report (Laurel Schwab)

MVP program update. Watertown Community Greening. Consultant Weston & Sampson will have 75% design drawings finished by the end of this grant cycle (end of June.) There was a 3/31 meeting with abutters and the public, regarding Community Greening on Templeton Parkway, Francis Street, and Dexter Avenue.

There is a Green Infrastructure walking tour scheduled for May 26 at 4 pm.

Watertown is doing a Comprehensive Plan update, including an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) update. Laurel will be working with Peter Centola and Bob Dirico.

Climate Plan is still a draft technically, pending adoption by City Council.

Per Caroline Bays, it will likely be referred to subcommittee. A new Climate Subcommittee has been formed, with Tony Palomba, Caroline Bays, and John Airasian.

- 5) **Decision**—Send a letter of support for the next MVP grant application. This will be the next stage of the Community Greening project, which includes community engagement.

Motion to send a letter of support. Motion—Ed. Second—Jeanne. All in favor? Ayes. All opposed? None.

6) Discussion about replacing synthetic turf (syn-turf) at Victory Field

Councilor Bays -- replacing the turf at Victory Field will not be in this year's CIP (Capital Improvement Plan.)

Jeanne -- we should send a pre-emptive letter reinforcing our stance on syn-turf. We should send it yearly and monitor investments like patches and repairs.

Caroline Bays -- suggestion, wait to send the letter until the new City Manager is in place.

Brian -- Committee should write not just about materials, but about the process. Ask for a public process regarding what is next for Victory Field, given strong syn-turf opposition in the past.

7) Decision

Jeanne needs a new Co-Chair. Ellen Menounos has offered to consider being Co-Chair.

Ellen -- Has the committee considered terms and term limits for serving as Chair/Co-Chair? Ellen open to Co-Chair role through the end of 2022.

Other suggestions -- Staggered terms, absolute term limit of three years, term limits as guidelines, rather than absolute rule.

Question, are there any other nominations for Co-Chair? Is there any other interest?

Jeanne -- Going forward the year should begin in September, with new Chairs chosen in July.

Motion to support Ellen as Co-Chair. Motion—Jeanne. Second—Ed. All in favor? Ayes. All opposed? None.

8) Working group updates

NetZero. NZ working group is still subsumed by the Climate Plan.

Ordinances. Question, who will initiate/draft new ordinances emerging from the Climate Plan?

Schools. Ellen met with Connie Henry. Talked about summer outreach when school is out. Started making a plan for social media outreach.

Watertown Electricity Choice. Unfortunately imposters have been door knocking and announcing themselves as representatives of Watertown Electricity Choice. Ed will need help with outreach for Watertown Electricity Choice. It will be promoted at the Farmer's Market and at an upcoming health fair (per Laurel.)

9) Q&A with Councilor Caroline Bays, our guest

Suggestions about how to spend ARPA money. (Syn-turf replacement, group buys of heat pumps?) This could be a separate discussion.

Meredith -- should we form an ARPA Suggestion working group?

Councilor Bays -- We have 2 to 6 months to submit suggestions. We need some ARPA guidance maybe from MAPC or MMA. Tom Tracy did a presentation about what is ARPA eligible and what is not.

Our next meeting will be on May 16, in three weeks. Councilor Emily Izzo will be our guest.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Menounos