

The Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee met remotely via Zoom at 7:00 PM on Monday, September 19, 2022.

The following members and staff were present: Ed Lewis (Energy Manager), Laurel Schwab (Senior Environmental Planner), Silas Fyler (Project Manager, Department of Public Buildings), Ellen Menounos (Co-Chair), Jeanne Trubek (Co-Chair), Pat Rathbone, Brian Hebeisen, Lauri Murphy, Carina Wallack, and Shin Nagpal

Others present: City Councilor Caroline Bays, Andres Guzman, Deborah Peterson, Steve Steadman, Ernesta Krackiewicz

The meeting started with a quorum at 7:03 with Ellen Menounos presiding.

Announcements

We welcomed our newest member, Shin Nagpal, and hope he will be a member a long time.

The joint Transportation working group has scheduled a short meeting with our new city manager Mr. George Proakis. We will meet with him on Monday, October 3. It is very easy to schedule a meeting with him, and other working groups should do this.

Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice and the Environment is holding its September monthly meeting on Wednesday the 21st. There will be a presentation and discussion of the Fair Share amendment. On October 1 there will be town-wide canvassing for the Fair Share amendment, meeting at 10:00 a.m. in Saltonstal Park.

There are two workshops to discuss the comprehensive plan, one at the middle school on Tuesday, Sept. 20 and one in the Library on Thursday, Sept. 29, both starting at 6:30.

On Wednesday, 9/21 at 4 pm, the Sustainability Subcommittee of the School Building Committee will be doing a presentation about the new High School on zoom.

The recycling committee is up and running.
Watertown is now offering free composting.

The next WE3C meeting is October 17.

1) The minutes from the July 18 meeting were approved unanimously.

2) Energy Manager Report (Ed Lewis)

Faire on the Square is this coming Saturday, September 24. Ed and Silas will be at the WE3C table to discuss the Climate Action Plan, Watertown Electricity Choice, Mass Save. Any volunteers from WE3C are welcome to join them.

CAP The City Council approved the Climate Action Plan (CAP) unanimously, with the addition of biannual updates. They will be recruiting interested people for working groups. Some assignments to working groups will be obvious; so will be more difficult.

Silas discussed the new stretch code. Since Watertown is a Green Community we utilize the stretch code which is more energy efficient than the standard building code. When the updated stretch code is formalized Watertown will automatically be governed by it. Alternatively, there will also be an option to adopt the 'specialized' stretch code. The specialized stretch code is geared much more toward full electrification of buildings. The City Council must approve to adopt the Specialized code. If it is passed before January 1, 2023 then it will take effect July 1, 2023. Unfortunately the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) is still working on the code.

The city is installing new EV chargers: on Howard St., at the new schools, and it is proposed to have them behind the Main Street CVS and near the Ryan rink. The city will also have electric shuttle buses for the Pleasant Street corridor and will have charging stations for them near the rink.

3) Environmental Planner Report (Laurel Schwab)

The Department of Public Works (DPW) received an urban forestry challenge to create a GIF of all trees on public land. The tree warden, Mike Micieli, is heading up that process. Free composting is underway. There is a wait-list of over 300 residents to get bins and join. There is a new recycling committee.

The Climate Action Plan now needs to work on outreach. We should decide whether we need a new working group focused on Climate Plan Outreach. Now is the time to start outreach to schools. The Net Zero working group should agree to take on the action items in Buildings and Energy.

The Tree Ordinance was submitted to the City Councilor and to the Interim City Manager in July. The DPW still has not given input. The ordinance has not been referred to subcommittee.

4) Transportation working group update.

The transportation working group has merged with the transportation working group of Watertown Faces Climate Change and added some other interested people to form the Joint transportation working group. We have been focused on the plans for Arsenal St. and for Mt. Auburn St. Although both claim to be improvements for all users, they do little to protect bikers and little to calm traffic. We would like the plans for Arsenal St. revisited since the plans were made 5 years ago and much has changed in that time. We are meeting regularly and will meet with Mr. Proakis on Oct. 3 to introduce ourselves.

5) Other working groups

We defer the discussion of setting up a working group on synthetic turf until later. Reports from other working groups will also be later.

6) New Business

Ed announced that he is retiring as of October 18. We cannot express how much we and the city will miss him.

The next meeting of WE3C will be Monday, October 17.

7) Decision—to adjourn at 8:30

Respectfully submitted by Jeanne Trubek