

Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee Minutes, 2/24/20.

Preliminary meeting opened at 5:00 p.m. Attendees: Brian Hebeisen, chair, Ed Lewis, Town Energy Manager, Andy Airasian, Deborah Peterson, Meredith Fields, Marlana Patton, Peregrine Energy, Paul Gromer, Peregrine Energy.

Focus of the meeting was publicity for Watertown Electricity Choice.

1. Revised Opt-out letter to new customers is still being reviewed at Dept of Public Utilities. It was voted unanimously that rather than wait the existing letter will be used until the new one is approved.
2. Card-sized handout design for Opt-Up campaign reviewed and small edits approved, will be printed on card stock. Cards will be shipped before election day next week so that volunteers can hand them out, to be organized by Deborah.
3. Sandwich boards at town locations with simple message discussed. Marlana will need dimensions for regular sandwich boards and large one for Town Hall location. Ed will research sizes, approvals from Town Manager and DPW, time frames and specific materials.
4. Blurb to be included in Town Newsletter that goes out with tax bills, Ed to follow up.
5. Posters with general information (rather than specifically for Opt-Up campaign) discussed for locations such as Town Hall, Library, Senior Center.
6. Yard signs will be considered at future meetings.
7. Letters Tab and Watertown News discussed, would not need review if from individuals.
8. Buck slip insert to include in water bills discussed.
9. Town website "news flash" with link to Watertown Electricity Choice website: Ed will follow up.
10. Social media: Individual committee members could post information if they wish.
11. Watertown Electricity Choice website changes: Logo and opt-up banner will go across the top, website will use language from publicity campaign, new calculator for pricing with price comparisons will be shown on pricing page, information re "protect yourself" from scams will be included on enrollment page with Attorney General's presentation.

General meeting opened at 7:02 p.m., chaired by Andy Airasian. Attendees: Andy Airasian, co-chair, Ed Lewis, Town Energy Manager, Laurel Schwab, Town Environmental Planner, Brian Hebeisen, Lauri Murphy, Meredith Fields, co-chair, Pat Rathbone, Stephen Steadman, Deborah Peterson, Andres Guzman, Ernesta Krackiewicz.

Announcements

Meredith announced Sat 4/4 10am-12noon: Trees & Climate Change in Watertown 2020 at Watertown Library speakers include Laurel Schwab, WE3C and WEC tables, Mount Auburn Cemetery table, poster, and four speakers. Tues. 2/25 10am at Statehouse: Transit Crisis meeting and legislators meeting. Tues 2/25 5-8pm: Climate Symposium at MIT can be streamed at climatesymposiaMIT.edu. Tues 2/25: Town Council mtg to include Waste Management tipping fee. Thurs 2/27 5pm.: School Building Committee Sustainability Subcommittee meeting regarding solar PPA vs. Ownership with presentation by consultant Beth Greenblatt, 6pm: full School Building Committee. 3/4, 8pm: 350 Mass webinar on Affordable Housing and Climate Action. 3/7 MCAN (MA Climate Action Network) Local Environmental Action Conference at Northeastern. Sat 3/7, 1pm at Hosmer School: Democratic Caucus for those interested in supporting Ed Markey's Green New Deal.

Energy Manager Report

Ed reported Mass. Voted 9th year in a row for leadership in Eversource & NGrid high ratings for MassSave money: \$1/2 billion for energy efficiency last year. Green Communities, stretch building code. International meeting on the stretch code council changes 2015-2018 for increasing building codes for commercial (greater increase) and residential (slight increase). All lighting projects meet or beat the codes. Appendices were added for states to go to zero net energy. Electrification and EVs included: Zipcar spaces, charging stations in 2021 code. Even fossil-fuel infrastructure must have electrified cables. Water heating addressed in efficiencies, lighting, and design to natural light in installed lamps even residential ones.

Environmental Manager Report

Laurel reported on Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) community outreach to focus groups, interviews, surveys (Laurel will send a link for survey). Final report expected in May and town will be eligible to apply for grants for projects. MVP will have an information table at

Trees and Climate Change Symposium on 4/4. Deborah suggested consider also 3/25 event on Biodiversity hosted by Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice and the Environment.

School Building Committee/Subcommittee Update

Brian and Pat reported on School Building Committee and Sustainability Subcommittee meetings including solar planning and electricity demand for Hosmer and Cuniff, with Hosmer at 100% and Cuniff now almost 100%. “Net zero” can only be estimated until buildings are occupied and production and use measured over the first year. Ed said PPA for municipalities is different from PPA for residences. Meredith raised question of where other WE3C recommendations for elementary schools stood in the planning process since so much focus has been on solar recently, Pat suggested follow-up at next Sustainability meeting(s). Brian reported on high school sites (current site combined with Phillips site or Victory Field) discussions re pros and cons. Laurel reported Conservation Commission sent letter recommending against Victory Field due to town open space concerns. Meredith suggested WE3C send letter of appreciation to Supt of Schools for commitments to sustainability in school buildings and operations and making this part of the educational program. Meredith will draft a letter for consideration at next meeting. It was suggested that Supt be invited to a WE3C meeting.

Transportation Working Group update

Meredith noted Jeanne Trubek unable to be at this meeting, attended Senator Will Brownsberger’s Town Hall at Watertown Library with a focus on transportation. We will ask Jeanne to report at next meeting.

Trees and Climate Change 2020 symposium

Meredith reviewed planning underway for Trees & Climate Change in Watertown 2020, Sat 4/4 10am-12noon at Watertown Library. Speakers to include Laurel Schwab on how trees function in overall environmental planning for the town. As at the symposium last year, various groups will host information tables including WE3C where we will have information on our committee and on Watertown Electricity Choice.

Gas Leaks & Alt. Fuels Working group

Group getting underway with membership Andy, Pat, Jeanne, Ari. Ernesta will join. Brian noted Brookline wants to help other towns convert from gas to alternative fuels/electrification. Lauri will contact Audrey Schulman of HEET SMART on speaking to WE3C at our next meeting on Monday 3/16.

Watertown Electricity Choice summary of preliminary meeting

Brian reviewed Opt-up handout, updating of website, new logo, tagline, messaging. It was noted Direct Energy can’t market individual contracts in Watertown now; the town program is tightly controlled with consumer protections.

Meeting adjourned 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted, Lauri Murphy and Meredith Fields