

The Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee met remotely via Zoom at 7:00 PM on Monday, February 27, 2023.

The following members and staff were present: Ed Lewis (Energy Manager, Emeritus), Silas Fyler (Energy Manager), Laurel Schwab (Environmental Planner), Anya Pforzheimer (Recycling and Sustainability Coordinator), Ellen Menounos (Co-Chair), Jeanne Trubek (Co-Chair), Pat Rathbone, Carina Wallack, Brian Hebeisen, Lauri Murphy

Members absent: Shin Nagpal

Others present: Ernesta Krackiewicz, David Gardner, Andres Guzman, Nate Russell, David Bearg, Josh Vernon

The meeting started with a quorum at 7:00 with Ellen Menounos presiding.

1) Announcements. The next meeting of WE3C will be Monday, March 20, 2023.

On February 28 there is a City Council meeting at which the council will discuss and vote on replacement of the artificial turf on Victory Field with more artificial turf. This will be both in person and online. See the City website for more information.

On March 9 there is an Open House on the Watertown Comprehensive Plan where the public may provide input. After public comments, the revised draft will go to the City Council for approval. The Open House will be from 6:30 to 8 PM at the Watertown Free Public Library.

2) Vote: To accept the 1-23-23 minutes minutes as they were drafted.

3) Energy Manager Report (Silas Fyler and Ed Lewis)

This has been the sixth warmest January on record.

Mass Save grant – Watertown received a grant from Mass Save to hire a Community energy advocate and coach. This will provide \$20,000 per year for two years to hire a part-time (16 hours/week) energy coach to assist residents with Mass Save Energy audits. If we meet our goals, we can renew the grant.

Draft Comprehensive Plan -- Draft Comprehensive Plan is posted on the City website. There is a strong correlation with the goals of the Climate Action Plan. The draft is strong on environmental issues.

Watertown Electricity Choice – We went for indicative bids because natural gas futures were down and we were pleasantly surprised at the results. Ed reviewed with City Manager Proakis, who agreed it was a good time to move forward. We expect to bid in two weeks. We are still formulating the bidding strategy.

There is one new factor—the State has changed how electricity generation reports the renewable energy content. Previously, only the additional Class 1 REC's (Renewable Energy Credits) were reported. Now Class 2 REC's must be included in the reporting. Class 2 REC's include waste energy (burning of trash to make electricity) and older renewable sources. A percentage of non-Class 1 REC's are currently required in electricity supply, and must be reported.

For Watertown Electricity Choice, the idea is still to have three options - Default 100% Renewable, Local 100% Green (just MA Class 1's, to bring us up to 100% renewable), and Basic 59.2% Green (same as Eversource Basic.) So for Watertown Electricity Choice, with our additional 30% Class 1 REC's, our default is now at 89.2% renewable. As we go out to bid, we will consider adding enough other Class 1's to bring default up to 100% Green.

4) Environmental Planner Report

Laurel has returned from maternity leave and introduced us to the whole new person she created. She congratulated everyone on the hard work and achievements during her absence.

The City Council Subcommittee on Climate and Energy meeting has tentatively been scheduled for the evening of March 16th, date subject to change. The purpose is for staff to provide a mid-year update on Climate Plan implementation. It will be a hybrid meeting and open to the public.

5) Working group updates

The Net Zero working group has drafted a Building Energy Use Disclosure Ordinance (BEUDO.) We discussed whether we should include a BERDO (Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance) at the same time. Although we might pass a BEUDO quickly, it might be more problematic to pass a BERDO subsequently. In the discussion, there was consensus that having the best ordinance possible was more important than getting an ordinance in place very quickly. We voted to send this back to the working group to consider all issues. The working group will bring it back to the committee. The state may legislate a BEUDO/BERDO, and it may be modeled after City of Boston. This will impact whatever ordinance we put in place.

Watertown Electricity Choice (WEC) working group. See above.

Transportation working group is drafting a proposal for the Comprehensive Plan open house asking to include alternate forms of transportation in their plan, such as micro-transit. They also plan to request ARPA funds to pilot this.

6) Special Guest: Recycling and Sustainability Coordinator Anya Pforzheimer

Anya told us of the effectiveness of new initiatives in reducing solid waste in the city. Residents must pay to have bulk items picked up. This has significantly reduced the amount of solid waste. Education programs in the form of signs and stickers are in place, to let people know what can go into the recycling bin. These are somewhat effective. The composting program is extremely successful and is expanding. Anya felt it was most effective to make this an opt-in program.

There is a **Watertown Recycling Event** on Saturday, March 25, 2023 from 10-2 at 57 Stanley Ave in the parking lot of Boston's Jewish Community Day School. Bring a Watertown ID or proof of residency. At this event residents may bring textiles, styrofoam, paper to be shredded, plastic caps, and more. For details see the city website. We were very happy to have Anya there.

7) Vote: To adjourn at 8:45. All ayes/approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Jeanne Trubek