

The Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee met remotely via Zoom at 7:00 PM on Monday, April 24, 2023.

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

Members absent: Shin Nagpal

Others present: Ernesta Krackiewicz, David Gardner, Susan LaDue, Connie Henry, Nicole Gardner, Tony Palomba, David Bearg, Steve Steadman, Jolly Tager

The meeting started with a quorum at 7:04 with Ellen Menounos presiding.

1. Announcements. The next meeting of WE3C will be online on Monday, May 15, 2023 at 7 pm.

2. Vote:

Motion to accept the 3/20/23 Minutes as they were drafted.

Motion 1—Pat; Motion 2--Jeanne.

All ayes/approved unanimously.

3. Environmental Planner Report (Laurel Schwab)

Silas and Laurel gave the 6-month Climate Plan Implementation report to the City Council Committee on Climate and Energy. The presentation is available on the City website, under Calendar/Mar 27, and on the WCATV website, Mar 27. The report went well. Laurel and Silas will continue to report every 6 months to the City Council Committee. The Resilient Watertown Website will be updated to reflect the progress that has been made. We will be talking with Gideon Schreiber in the Planning department about changes in ordinances. Ellen commented that she was not able to remotely connect with this meeting.

Laurel spoke with Amelia Young, the coordinator of the Hatch MakerSpace. Sustainability is their theme for the year. The MakerSpace will have a fix-it clinic this summer, to encourage people to reduce consumption and waste by repairing. People will be able to bring in household objects that need repair, and volunteers will help with repairs. Laurel will invite Amelia Young to a WE3C meeting to explore opportunities for collaboration between WE3C and Hatch.

4. Energy Manager Report (Silas Fyler)

Watertown Electricity Choice (WEC) went out to bid. The new contract is for 3 years, and the rate is less than 14¢/KWH. There are still 3 levels, basic, default, and premium. The basic level has the same amount of green electricity as is required by the state. Both the default and the premium levels are 100% green. The difference is that the default level includes Texas Wind Renewable Energy Certificates (REC's), whereas the premium level is 100% green using all local Class 1 REC's. The new rates will take effect January 1, 2024. The energy broker will help with marketing materials.

Two Net Zero elementary schools, the Cunniff and the Hosmer, are now up and running. The Cunniff is now producing more electricity than it is using. We should publicize and celebrate this good news. Maximum energy use occurs during the winter and the summer.

Construction on the Phillips School and the temporary High School on Moxley Field is going according to plan.

One Electric Bus (EB) for the Pleasant Street route is running, and a second has arrived and is awaiting decals. The bus schedule and stops are on the city website. Gideon is filling in as transportation planner until one is hired.

The City needs a Home Improvement Contractor in order to participate in MASS SAVE programs, to do energy audits, and to help residents to install heat pumps and weatherize. This will require an RFP process (Request For Proposal.) This will be a discussion item at the next meeting.

5. Transportation working group

Jeanne presented the proposal that the joint transportation group is making to the Budget and Finance Committee, to use ARPA funds to study Watertown's transportation needs and how to meet them.

We discussed the proposal, made edits, and voted to include WE3C as one of the co-signees.

Motion 1 – Silas; Motion 2 – Pat.

All ayes/approved unanimously.

6. Working Group reports

Tree Ordinance – no updates

Net Zero – Brian reported that the working group met, chose a chair (Brian) and began their initial discussion about BEUDO and BEURDO. They met with Jennifer Ballew, Sustainability officer for Cambridge and a Watertown resident. From her input about what other cities have gone through, they decided that it is very important to do this carefully. They are trying to schedule a second meeting with her.

WEC – see above

Outreach – Ellen and Connie Henry will be on the Climate Plan Outreach working group, and Brian will participate as well. Laurel pointed out that there are many groups working on education and outreach for the Climate and Energy Plan, and we need a WE3C working group to keep track of what is being done.

Discussion

- How is the message getting out? Messaging should be consistent and forward-friendly.
- Connie Henry suggested that we think about desired outcomes.
- Onboarding new people should be a primary goal.
- Councilor Gardner -- The Climate Plan per se is not important to most people. People care more about changes that will impact their day-to-day lives, like taxes, roads, etc.
- Comparison of Resilient Watertown vs Green Newton.
- Resilient Watertown website can be a one stop shop for all things climate and energy.

Transportation Committee – see above

- 7. New business** – Last meeting Ellen noted that WE3C recorded meetings are posted on the City website. Silas looked into whether we are required to post video recordings vs. audio, and whether either is to be provided upon request. Per the City Clerk and Steve Magoon, the video postings are required at this time.

- 8. Vote: To adjourn at 8:30.** All ayes/approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Jeanne Trubek