

The Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee met remotely via Zoom at 7:00 PM on Monday, May 15, 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, Shin Nagpal **Members absent:** Carina Wallack **Others present:** Ernesta Krackiewicz, David Gardner, Connie Henry, David Bearg, Steve Steadman

The meeting started with a quorum at 7:00 with Jeanne Trubek presiding.

1. Announcements.

The next meeting of WE3C will be online on Monday, June 26 at 7 pm.

We have one open seat on the committee.

Watertown Farmer's Market is starting on Wed June 14 in Saltonstall Park.

- New this year there will be a Sustainability Booth. Anya from DPW will host second Wed of every month; Laurel and Resilient Watertown will host fourth Wed of every month.
- Other signups include Watertown Community Gardens/School Gardens; Farm to School/School Gardens; WPS Environmental Club; Friends of Bees; Buy Nothing Watertown Facebook group; Beyond Plastics; Stormwater Advisory Committee; Watertown Faces Climate Change
- WE3C will confirm a date late summer. We should think about what materials to bring to the table, including a handout about the committee itself, and an updated list of accomplishments. Lauri offered the summary of WE3C accomplishments she drafted for the 2021 Watertown Climate Summit for Laurel/Silas to update for this purpose.

2. Vote: Motion to accept the 4/24/23 Minutes as they were drafted.

Motion 1—Silas; Motion 2--Ellen. All ayes/approved unanimously.

3. Energy Manager Report (Silas Fyler)

There is a new website for energy assessments: <https://www.masssave.com/community-first/watertown>

4. Environmental Planner Report (Laurel Schwab)

- Laurel still trying to connect with Amelia Young, the coordinator of the Hatch MakerSpace.
- City Manager has submitted his 2024 fiscal year budget. Several budget line items address Climate Action Plan goals, including public buildings analysis and a vehicle/fleet charging study.
- The Resilient Watertown website has been updated.
- Charles River Watershed Association has a Climate Compact group, which is working on a regional tree planting and protection plan.

5. Working Group reports

Climate Outreach (Ellen) – first meeting is tomorrow (May 16) at 1 pm. Ellen, Connie Henry, Brian. First steps will be to establish a meeting schedule, take a look at what climate outreach is already happening in town, and figure out next steps for Resilient Watertown website.

Tree Ordinance (Ellen) – no update

Transportation (Jeanne) – has submitted ARPA fund request, Deb Peterson is lead; Steve Magoon estimated that the transportation feasibility study might be about \$30k.

Net Zero (Brian) – meeting tomorrow night (May 16) to begin to compare BERDO/BEUDO in other municipalities. Looking at Cambridge and Boston first, then Lexington, Brookline, Newton, and maybe one from out of state.

Watertown Electricity Choice (WEC) (Silas) – no update. Last month was a big push going out to bid; new rates in effect as of Jan 1, 2024.

6. Discussion:

The City needs a Home Performance Contractor (HPC) in order to participate in Mass Save programs. This will require a Request For Proposal (RFP)—a draft RFP was sent out prior to this meeting. This is part of an overall effort to help residents move towards electrification by installing heat pumps, weatherizing, etc. A committee will review the RFP responses.

Question, How does this work for renters?

Question, Will this be a long-term contract?

Question, What languages will we translate materials into?

Question, How does this fit into our overall goals/strategies?

Comment: The Energy Advocate (the part-time, grant-funded position the City will be filling) will communicate, promote and handle inquiries about solar, EVs, Mass Save, etc.

Question, How will the energy advocate interface with the HPC?

Question, Mass Save energy audits tend to be somewhat superficial. Will having an HPC improve that?

Comment: Mass Save is not set up to do deep energy retrofits. E.g. a heat pump assessment is something extra you have to ask for. Shin Nagpal offered to share his Mass Save energy audit.

Question, Have we thought about data tracking? Will the HPC be responsible for any data entry?

The City's building inspectors and permitting system will need to track data about # of heat pumps, etc

Brian Hebeisen, Shin Nagpal, David Gardner, David Bearg will keep working on the draft RFP with Silas.

7. Discussion: What is community solar, and where does that fit in?

- Having solar panels on your roof delivers the best savings, this is the gold standard
- Leasing solar panels on your roof delivers somewhat less savings
- Community solar, or getting solar power from a solar farm delivers somewhat less
- Buying solar REC's through a program like WEC delivers somewhat less

A person might combine these different levels to get the solar power/savings they need.

Energy Sage started out by doing comparisons of solar installers <https://www.energysage.com/>

8. Discussion: Could we move our meetings to the fourth Monday every month instead of third?

9. Vote: Motion to adjourn at 8:30.

Motion 1—Brian; Motion 2--Pat. All ayes/approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Menounos