

The Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee met remotely via Zoom at 7:00 PM on Monday, July 17, 2023.

The following members and staff were present:

Ellen Menounos (Co-Chair), Jeanne Trubek (Co-Chair), Silas Fyler (Energy Manager), Brian Hebeisen, Pat Rathbone, Shin Nagpal

Others present: Ernesta Krackiewicz, Anita Roy Dobbs, Larry Raskin, Susan LaDue, David Bearg

Members and staff absent: Carina Wallack, Lauri Murphy, Laurel Schwab (Environmental Planner)

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

1. Announcements.

- The next meeting of WE3C will be Monday, Aug 21 at 7 pm (on Zoom).
In the past few years, the committee has not met in August because it was hard to round up a quorum, but this year we have enough members available to hold a meeting.
- In August, the committee will plan for Faire on the Square (FOTS) (which is in September.) Silas will be in charge of literature for FOTS. Peregrine will advise.
- Anita Roy Dobbs has offered to speak to the committee about ‘the last house on the line’, meaning, gas infrastructure stays in place until the last house on a street or block has converted to renewable power. Anita will talk about legislative and other obstacles blocking geothermal power grids. Q&A to follow.

Consensus: Anita will join the August WE3C meeting as a guest speaker.

2. Vote: Motion to accept the 6/26/23 Minutes as they were drafted.

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

3. Energy Manager Report (Silas Fyler)

- The new Director of Public Buildings is Denise Moroney. Silas has been busy covering this position since Jim Kane left.
- The new Fire Chief is Ryan Nicholson.
- The Inflation Reduction Act is helping the City to pay for solar panels on Hosmer School, Cunniff School, and the Hosmer battery. Money will go back into general funds.

4. Environmental Planner Report (Laurel Schwab)

- Laurel is working to get a meeting of the City Council Climate & Energy Subcommittee scheduled for September, to do a one-year review of climate plan progress.
- Resilient Watertown blog posts are in the planning stages – they will be about the experience of “going green” i.e., installing a heat pump, or switching to an EV. If you would like to write something, or if you have other ideas for blog posts, please reach out.

5. Guest Amelia Young, Coordinator for Hatch Makerspace, joined us to talk about Hatch and potential Hatch-WE3C collaborations.

Hatch got a 5K grant for Sustainability Programming from the Watertown Community Foundation. They are trying to promote used and biodegradable materials, incorporate materials education and repair education into existing workshops.

The Watertown Free Public Library (WFPL) and DPW will be holding a Fix It Clinic on a Saturday in November. A Fix It Clinic has a specific format; a Repair Cafe is something different.

Other thoughts/ideas

- Pat suggested that the Library of Things (at WFPL) include an induction cooktop.
- Other build/maker ideas (which support climate/energy/environmental goals) would be raised beds, bee houses.
- Where could the town store bulky materials such as lumber for re-use?
- Facebook pages like Everything is Free and Buy Nothing are a good way to exchange free stuff (also Freecycle)
- Ellen and Amelia to brainstorm display case idea at WFPL.

6. Working Group reports

Climate Outreach (Ellen) – Laurel, Katie Swan, Ellen, Connie Henry, and Brian are working on making the Resilient Watertown website a user-friendly resource for high-leverage decarbonization actions like heat pumps and solar. The goal is to make web changes by September (when Climate & Energy Subcommittee meet.)

Physical, tangible modes of outreach might include display case at WFPL, Community Greening walks.

Transportation (Jeanne) – The transportation working group has been dormant this past month. The only news is that the MBTA has announced that there will be changes to the #57 bus, with meetings and hearings to be scheduled.

Net Zero (Brian) – The Net Zero work continues to work on a draft BERDO ordinance.

- 7. Discussion:** There is a new National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) rule limiting the amount of solar panels a roof can have. Brian is looking into this.
- 8. Suggestion:** Invite Will Brownsberger or Steve Owens as a guest at a future meeting.
- 9. Vote:** Motion to adjourn at 8:30.
Motion 1—Brian; Motion 2--Ellen. All ayes/approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Menounos