

The Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee met remotely via Zoom at 7:00 PM on Monday, September 25, 2023.

The following members and staff were present:

Ellen Menounos (Co-Chair), Jeanne Trubek (Co-Chair), Silas Fyler (Energy Manager), Laurel Schwab (Environmental Planner), Ryan Hamilton (Energy Advocate), Brian Hebeisen, Pat Rathbone,

Others present: Libby Shaw, David Gardner, Liz Cremens (Residents Advisory Committee), Mary Rose, Steve Steadman, Pam Phillips

Guests: Julie Janiski of Buro Happold (guest), Rickie Golden of Alexandria Real Estate (guest)

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

1. Announcements.

- The next meeting of WE3C will be Monday, October 16, at 7 pm (on Zoom).
- Vote: Draft minutes from 8/21/23 were approved unanimously.

2. Discussion with Julie Janiski and Rickie Golden concerning environmental impact of Watertown Mall development.

Questions and notable discussion points:

- What will the lifespan of the buildings be? Unknown.
- Will building design rely on passive systems vs active systems?
- Will buildings use renewables or will they rely on RECs (renewable energy credits) to achieve NetZero/low carbon standards?
- What is the target EUI (energy use intensity)? What portion of the EUI would be from solar?
- Envelope performance is important, but in lab construction, the efficiency of the systems is much more important than the building envelope. Labs circulate a huge amount of fresh air. MA stretch code requires exceptional envelope performance. Triple glazing, etc
- Will there be solar onsite? Yes. But, rooftop solar is challenging in lab projects. Labs have very specific equipment and build requirements like vivariums, clean rooms, etc
- Is there an energy model for the building yet? Yes.
- Fossil fuel systems will be used for resiliency in temperature extremes. There will be ups and downs in the availability of renewables in Massachusetts, as we level up supply.
- Is geothermal being considered? (Buro Happold has worked with HEET to assess the replacement of aging natural gas infrastructure with networked ground source heat pumps.)
- WE3C NetZero working group would like to continue the conversation offline. Julie can invite the team-member who is doing the energy modeling for this project.
- For this project, Oct 11 is the planning board meeting, Oct 25 is the zoning meeting.

3. Energy Manager Report (Silas Fyler)

- A new EV charger is being installed on Howard St
- Katie Swan is working on a GIS map of all the EV chargers around town

- EV charging locations will include: library, 3 new elementary schools, Spring St, Nichols St, Howard St, and Paramount Place by the hockey rink

4. Environmental Planner Report (Laurel Schwab)

- At last a new Transportation Planner has been hired, Zeke.
- Laurel presented a one-year review of climate plan progress to the City Council Climate & Energy Subcommittee on September 18. It was a hybrid meeting. Recording and slides will be available. Councilor Palomba requested quarterly updates, next update will be on 12/14.
- Watertown Square redevelopment project is kicking off Oct 17 from 6-8 at the old Sasaki building. A charette process will happen in late November.
- The Trees for Watertown annual meeting will happen Saturday 9/30 at the library.
- The new Watertown Comprehensive Plan was adopted last week.
- Laurel introduced Ryan Hamilton, Energy Advocate. Ryan is working 16 hrs/week for the duration of the Mass Save grant. Ryan is a UVM grad and he has worked for Seaside Sustainability in Gloucester. In Watertown, he will be a liaison between Mass Save and Watertown residents/businesses, focusing on hard-to-reach populations. Reach him at rhamilton@watertown-ma.gov or 857 278 4728.

5. Faire on the Square

- Faire on the Square was a success despite the rain. New names were added to the WE3C mailing list. Thanks to all who spent time at the table and especially to staff who helped WE3C prepare for the event.
- Laurel and Ryan were able to connect with churches and real estate agencies.

6. Discussion about the new solar setbacks for residential roofs

- There is a new federal law which limits the number of solar panels on residential roofs. Towns and cities can opt out. Some TBD combination of WE3C members and/or City staff will discuss with the fire department.

7. Working groups

- Transportation: The 'NewMo' microtransit service in Newton is being cut back. (Starting in September, NewMo service will be limited to seniors, low-income riders and people with disabilities.) The working group is seeing that microtransit will need to be subsidized. It is expensive, but it is a public service.
- Ordinances: There was an internal meeting about the Tree Ordinance. DPW is working on an edited draft.
- Net Zero: Working hard on BEUDO draft, want to submit soon. How best to submit the draft and to whom?
- Outreach: The new Climate Outreach newsletter has almost 500 subscribers. Jeanne asked that the map of EV chargers be included in a future newsletter.

Vote: Motion to adjourn at 8:30 approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Menounos