

The Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee met remotely via Zoom at 7:00 PM on Monday, October 16, 2023.

The following members and staff were present:

Jeanne Trubek (Co-Chair), Silas Fyler (Energy Manager), Laurel Schwab (Environmental Planner), Brian Hebeisen, Pat Rathbone, Shin Nagpal, Lauri Murphy

Absent: Ellen Menounos (Co-Chair), Carina Wallack

Others present: Ernesta Krackiewicz, Connie Henry, Pam Phillips, Nicole Gardner

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

1. Announcements.

- Tomorrow 10/17 is the first meeting of Re-imagine Watertown Square, with consultants. The event will be from 6-8 at 64 Pleasant St.
- The transportation working group would like to invite the new Transportation Planner to a WE3C meeting soon.
- Make Polluters Pay event is 10/22 from 2-4. Steve Owens and Laurel Schwab will be there.
- The next meeting of WE3C will be Monday, November 20, at 7 pm on Zoom.

2. Vote: Minutes from 9/25/23 were approved unanimously.

3. Energy Manager Report (Silas Fyler)

- All the solar arrays are online at last. Dede Galdston (Watertown Superintendent) is going to do a presentation to superintendents and wants to thank everyone for their support for the Net Zero schools.
- Silas spoke about the new rates for Watertown Electricity Choice that are coming up. This is in the working group reports

4. Environmental Planner Report (Laurel Schwab)

- The new Transportation Planner, Zeke Mermell, is on board, but he is very busy right now learning who and what he needs to know for this job. Let's invite him to a meeting in December or later.
- Try to attend the meeting tomorrow about the redesign of Watertown Square. The city has not committed to any specific plan yet and wants input from as many residents as possible.

5. Vote: To send Net Zero working group budget priorities to the City Council

The budget priorities are:

- Adding resources to the Energy Department. Specifically, responsibility for Buildings and Energy are both in this Energy Department and there are fifteen items that need to be done. In addition to being the Energy Manager, Silas is also responsible for buildings and facilities, and that is very demanding. We need an additional person to achieve the goals of the Climate Action Plan.
- Transportation has great needs. If, as the Climate Plan calls for, we are to reduce vehicles by 50% by 2050, this will be a very difficult task. To support that goal, we need to draft a transit plan. Or, if ARPA funds are available for creating the plan, City funds can be used towards implementing such a plan.
- We need a half-time certified arborist located in DPW to do outreach and education.
- Brian proposed a letter with all three priorities and Pat will draft it and send it to Jeanne and Ellen for review.

6. Gas transition follow up info – Anita Roy Dobbs has sent the gas/geothermal slides via email.

7. Working groups

- Transportation: Zeke (new Transportation Planner) has a meeting with the working group. The working group is also scheduling a meeting with Jeffrey Dirk, from Vanasse & Associates. This is the traffic planner who works with Alexandria and also O'Connor Capital Partners and other Watertown developments and who reports on the transportation impacts of these developments.
- Net Zero: Net Zero is meeting weekly and working on a draft BEURDO. The Energy Managers' Association appreciates this work. They hope to present the ordinance soon.
- Watertown Electricity Choice: Letters go out Oct 30 with the new rates. Standard is 13.74¢ per KWH, 100% green is 15.9¢, basic is 13.45¢. Eversource may be higher than the 16. It is now; it's already higher than our 100% renewable. Nonprofits need to resubmit their status.

Vote: Motion to adjourn at 8:15 approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Menounos