

West Newbury Energy Advisory Committee
Wednesday, February 15, 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM
Second floor meeting room, 1910 Building, 381 Main Street.

Present: Elisa Grammer, Camden Holland, Stephen Doran, Rick Parker, Chip Wallace

B2Q proposal. Why we are only talking to B2Q about the solar site feasibility study? Rick reviewed the history of discussions with Ameresco and Cadmus, neither of whom were interested. Solar Design Associates was also mentioned. But given the limited scope of work and what we know about Solar Design Associates, all agreed it is OK to proceed with B2Q.

In the economic analysis we should ask for more definition about what information will be provided to evaluate own vs. lease options (item 5g). Let's ask them for the model they would use to estimate costs and benefits, beyond just a letter report, so we can test different variables. For example, an Excel based model. Also, there should be a specific summary of applicable benefits from IRA that should be considered.

Rick will communicate these comments to the DPW Director to incorporate in his communications with B2Q before awarding the contract.

Solar bylaw update. Chip and Rick reviewed recent meetings and discussions with planning board representatives. The update will allow solar development by right where property is located near the supporting infrastructure, and excluding locations of high conservation value. A vote is anticipated at the next town meeting if the proposal is ready in time.

Long range planning. Rick proposed creating a more defined strategy for achieving GHG reductions in town and gaining the associated economic benefits. New activities could include helping to advise people about competitive options for buying electricity. And promote Mass Save services.

The current strategy includes the solar feasibility study and ongoing efficiency upgrades at the municipal complex. We should communicate the main points from the recent decarbonization report at the next town meeting.

Rick mentioned there is an opportunity to create custom fields in new property assessment software the town will be installing. We could track information on properties including type of heating system, cooking stove, insulation characteristics, etc. to improve data collection on carbon emissions in the town.

Municipal aggregation. Chip reached out to a new contact at Good Energy, there was no response right away. Elisa will email Chip with specific questions she would like us to ask Colonial Power.

Other business. Rick mentioned the upcoming NESEA North(east) sustainable energy trade show/conference. It will be held in Boston at the end of March, he will probably attend.

A West Newbury resident who works at Mitsubishi who has offered to do a presentation about heat pumps for other residents. Compared to utility contractor ClearResult, which has to go through a specified process in how they present information, a private company representative may have some advantages.

Book recommendation: Pandora's Toolbox by Yale lecturer Wake Smith. Subtitle: The Hopes and Hazards of Climate Intervention. Mitigation alone is not enough, climate intervention will be required. For example, reducing solar insolation (geoengineering approach).

Our librarian is open to participating in public awareness events.

Another thought for the committee report to the town: we have a policy to purchase electric equipment, no fossil fuel equipment unless there is no alternative, starting in FY 2024.

School buses. There is a company (<https://highlandfleets.com/>) who runs a PPA-like model for electric school bus fleets. The vendor buys, maintains, owns and operates the fleet for a fee. Beverly is implementing a school bus project with them.

Book recommendation 2: <https://www.danielyergin.com/books/thenewmap>.