

West Newbury Energy and Sustainability Committee

April 27, 2022.

Present: Rick Parker, Elisa Grammer, Chip Wallace.

GHG inventory and decarbonization report discussion with consultant John Snell.

Vehicles and buildings are the top two GHG emission sources. A smaller third source includes off road vehicles, leaf blowers and industrial lawn equipment, based on the square footage of lawn in town.

Estimates are based on statewide data that are a few years old. Data on oil, gas, and diesel emissions are approximate. Electricity data is available from utility companies.

Propane is normally about 10% of fuel use. Oil is 65 percent. The GHG spreadsheet has links to show where data comes from. Data sources include the Energy Information Administration based on census data, and state databases. Each community also has access to its own types of data. An assessor database can be a good source of information regarding fuel used in town or private buildings.

Rick has talked to the WN town assessor. It is difficult to find anything on properties with geothermal/ground source heat pumps, though he knows of at least 6 in town. Data on air source heat pumps is similarly lacking. However, the current state of assessor data can tell us something about the presence of oil and propane systems, and about size and age of buildings. DOE has a program to help assessors develop a home energy score based on available info and followup with residents.

Another approach is to focus on tracking new equipment as it gets installed. Mass Save can possibly give information on projects that received incentives in West Newbury.

Overall recommendations are to electrify buildings and vehicles. Deep energy retrofits for a percentage of buildings might sometimes be a preferable option to installing more efficient equipment. Insulating basements and waterproofing might be ways to avoid conflicts with historic preservation of buildings.

National Grid has a lot of data they could provide about the status of solar resources in town, since they have to approve them all. Vehicle data is from 2016 and so not that current.

West Newbury should consider cooperating with other local communities on projects. A larger project can open up more possibilities. We might want to promote Mass Save and increase the number of homes participating in its services.

Some towns have set up reporting systems where homeowners do the updating of data, including on projects where they have done the work for themselves.

The committee thanked Mr. Snell for his time and effort, and ended the call.

Warrant article on solar site feasibility study on town-owned land. All Select Board members supported the article. The Finance Committee voted 3-2 in favor.

Elisa proposed to create an informational flyer for distribution at town meeting, emphasizing financial benefits of the existing Main Street solar field. She will write a draft for review by the committee.