

## Energy Committee

Carlton Hunt – Chair  
Thomas Carson – Vice Chair  
Kristen Zarrelli – Secretary

Academy Building - 66 Central Square  
Bridgewater, MA 02324



### Meeting Minutes for the Meeting Convening on 04/18/2023 Prepared by Kristen Zarrelli.

**Link to Meeting Recording:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnZVhPiT-p0>

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#### **A. Call to Order at 6:31 PM**

**B. Members in Attendance** – Carlton Hunt, Thomas Carson, Kristen Zarrelli  
**Guests in attendance** – Bob Rulli

#### **C. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- a. October 10th, 2022 – the motion to approve was accepted by Thomas and seconded by Kristen with no further discussion
- b. January 17th – the motion to approve was accepted by Thomas and seconded by Carlton with no further discussion

**D. Public Comment** - None

#### **E. Presentation**

Bob Rulli, Bridgewater's Director of Community and Economic Development, discussed:

- a. Revitalization of the Central Square area and the redevelopment of the campus Plaza site, Perkins Foundry site, and some other infill sites relevant to the MBTA zoning requirements.
- b. Revision of the zoning ordinances to include form-based code, a planning tool that lays out a checklist for developers about what the community would prefer in terms of building materials, types, location, street trees, renewable energy, and other factors. Memorization of this code would expedite development that satisfies the code.
  - i. This code could apply to mixed-use and housing developments in town
  - ii. Bridgewater has adopted the MA Stretch Code which will emphasize energy efficiency in building design
    1. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/building-energy-code>
  - iii. If the code is not satisfied, the developer would have to follow traditional routes of obtaining approval.
- c. Incentives for developers to incorporate energy efficiency, renewable energy, and high-efficiency heating and cooling systems.
- d. A consultant to assist in writing the zoning amendment and the code modification.
- e. Town's eligibility for \$100,000 to \$300,000 of grant funding through the Mass Housing Choice program.

## **F. Old Business**

### **a. Energy Aggregation**

- i. The energy aggregation program has advanced significantly, and the Town Council has an order to explore it further and hire a consultant.
- ii. The Town Council sent it to the rules committee, who may discuss it in their next bi-weekly meeting

### **b. Goal reports**

- i. The reports are being troubleshooted for readability.
- ii. The chair suggests condensing the reports into list-format.
- iii. Energy Initiative Goals and CPCT Conference
  1. UMASS Amherst's Extension school has Community Planning for Solar Toolkit:  
<https://ag.umass.edu/clean-energy/research-new-initiatives/solarplanning>
  2. The Chair discusses using this Toolkit for the town to plan a municipal solar project for parking lots and other locations. The chair has connected with the program to discuss how to start the process.
  3. The Chair has made a powerpoint presentation on the available parcels of land for potential projects
    - a. Factors inhibiting projects for this topic:
      - i. Access to three-phase power lines
      - ii. Host capacity - What capacity the National Grid has for hooking into solar or wind energy projects
    - b. The chair has mapped out which parcels are suitable for this project and suggests a workshop to hone in on the topic
- iv. Energy Education Program
  1. The Chair discusses how the committee can create an education program and to discuss the workshop.
  2. The co-chair and secretary agree that creating bite-sized informative visuals will be helpful to get committee updates out there
  3. Chair suggests the committee take action to focus on solarization and public outreach topic in future meetings.

### **c. Big Belly Solar**

- i. The committee discussed the possibility of moving the trash compactor and where to place it. It is suggested that the compactor be moved to Legion Field, and potentially to a center in town. The committee discusses the possibility of getting funding for the project and presenting it to the Town Council.

### **d. Municipal Energy Tracking and Solar Field Municipal Energy Supply**

- i. The chair discussed Municipal energy tracking with the Municipal Energy Initiative (MEI) database including fossil fuel use, the new accounts added to the

database, and his request for the Town to obtain a list of all active Municipal electrical accounts.

1. FYI - The chair discussed funding opportunities for this topic with the Community and Economic Development Director
- ii. The chair indicated the Town's finance department has been unable to provide information on the solar electrical supply from the Fireworks Circle and the solar energy credit process due to pressing Town budget development.
- iii. The NGRID Solar Energy Credit process - deferred to a future meeting.
- iv. Small Scale wind
  1. The chair thinks the opportunity to utilize small-scale wind turbines could be included in the aforementioned form-based code
  2. Consideration of sample scale wind ordinance was deferred to a later meeting.

**e. Sol Smart Designation**

- i. The conclusion was the committee needed more information before deciding.
- ii. The concept would be that Bridgewater agrees to be a town committed to reducing its carbon footprint.

**f. Affiliation with State Organizations**

- i. Massachusetts Climate Action Network (MCAN)
  1. The secretary suggested connecting with MCAN to start a chapter in Bridgewater, but has not heard back from the South Shore Chapter for Bridgewater to be included
    - a. <http://www.sustainablesouthshore.org/>
- ii. Connecting with Green Communities Coordinator
  1. The Chair mentions that Green Communities South-East region coordinator Lisa Sullivan may be a resource the committee can utilize to obtain updates/information on opportunities for Bridgewater
    - a. The chair will take the action to send the secretary this information

**G. New Business**

**a. PHIUS (Passive House Institute US)**

- i. The Committee considered a proposal to advocate for PHIUS (Passive House Institute US), an international code for energy efficiency. The guidance includes energy consumption efficiency including building leakage tightness and efficient appliances.

- ii. The target on the new Stretch code is a HERs rating of 45, the lower the number, the better.

- iii. **New Fire Station**

- 1. The Chair presented information regarding potential energy conservation measures for the new fire station in anticipation of a discussion with the station's design architect.
- 2. The chair motions to send a letter to the building committee, in their deliberations, should consider following the PHIUS requirements for energy initiatives at the fire station.
- 3. The energy committee recommends that the fire station building committee consider energy efficiency as good as PHIUS or better.
  - a. The co-chair makes the motion for the building committee to look into this. The secretary seconds the motion.
  - b. The chair, co-chair, and secretary all vote Yes on this motion
- 4. The co-chair notes that there may be funding opportunities for this topic as well.
- 5. The chair will take an action to send the building committee a memo about PHIUS for them to consider in their discussions

- b. **Green Communities Grant Opportunities**

- i. The Chair discussed the Green Communities grant process which includes an opportunity for municipalities to apply for grant funds for decarbonization and energy efficiency projects.
  - 1. The chair is talking with the town planner to apply the grant to target buildings in town
  - 2. The first of a bi-annual application is due on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. The second round is due in the fall.
- ii. There are two types of Green Community competitive grant opportunities. The first is a competitive grant for up to \$200,000 for energy efficiencies; the second is for a multi-year decarbonization grant for up to \$500,000. The committee discussed whether the Town should apply for the lesser grant or the larger decarbonization grant. Projects that fully replace fossil fuel fired heating systems are prioritized.
- iii. \$200,00 Grant:
  - 1. Re-open once the project is finished, which has a target of 1-year.
- iv. \$500,000 Grant:
  - 1. Municipalities applying for this grant cannot apply for other project grants in this period. Awardees will be ineligible to apply for competitive grants for two years
  - 2. Applications to the 500,000 dollar grant will require a 25% project match by the town and have the following requirements:
    - a. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
    - b. Be completed within three years of grant contract execution

- v. Two potential projects mentioned as possible applications for the decarbonization grant are the fire station (a new build) and the 1843 townhouse (a renovation).

**c. Citizen Planner Training Collaborate Conference: Lessons Learned**

- i. The Energy Committee Chair and Clerk attended the conference and provided preliminary information on lessons learned.
  - 1. Aforementioned Solar Planning Tool kit;
    - a. **Community Solar Planning Tool Kit:**[ag.umass.edu/solarplanning](http://ag.umass.edu/solarplanning)
  - 2. **MA Resilient Lands Initiative and Healthy Soils Action Plan**
    - a. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/resilient-lands>
  - 3. **MGL Ch.40A 5.3 9th paragraph - Zoning Act Exception**
    - a. <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter40A/Section5>
  - 4. **Agrivoltaics - Dual-use land - Solar/agricultural,**
    - a. Ch. 179, Acts of 2022
      - i. <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2022>
    - b. SMART Program for agrivoltaics
      - i. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/solar-massachusetts-renewable-target-smart-program>
  - 5. **DOER Tech Potential of Solar**
    - a. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/technical-potential-of-solar-study#:~:text=DOER%20currently%20administers%20the%20Solar,developed%20on%20less%20preferred%20land>.
  - 6. **Mass Audubon - Gaining Carbon — Modeling carbon, energy, and geospatial relationships:**
    - a. [https://massland.org/sites/default/files/files/gaining\\_carbon\\_2-page\\_r.pdf](https://massland.org/sites/default/files/files/gaining_carbon_2-page_r.pdf)
  - 7. **National grid hosting capacity map**
    - a. <https://gridforce.my.site.com/s/article/Massachusetts-System-Data-Portal>
    - b. <https://systemdataportal.nationalgrid.com/MA/>
  - 8. **Inflation Reduction Act —**
    - a. How much to increase 30% solar tax credit for residential solar?
      - i. <https://www.energy.gov/eere/solar/homeowners-guide-federal-tax-credit-solar-photovoltaics>
  - 9. **Act to Encourage Solar Development on Built and Developed Land S.2150**
    - a. <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/S2150>
  - 10. **BioMap3**
    - a. BioMap is an important tool to guide strategic protection and stewardship of lands and waters that are most important for conserving biological diversity in Massachusetts.
      - i. <https://biomap-mass-eoea.hub.arcgis.com/>

## 11. MassGIS

- a. <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massgis-bureau-of-geographic-information>
- b. <https://maps.massgis.digital.mass.gov/MassMapper/MassMapper.html>

## 12. SNEP Bylaw Review:

- a. <https://snepnetwork.org/bylaw-review/>

## 13. GRANT: Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program

- a. <https://www.mass.gov/municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-mvp-program>

## 14. GRANT: EPA Technical Assistance Grants

- a. <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/technical-assistance-grant-tag-program>

## d. Alternative Energy Development and Strategic Planning

### i. Energy Consultant

1. The Chair discussed his conversations with the Town Manager regarding potential solar field development on municipal property and the need for support to develop the concept.
  - a. Based on his input it was suggested the Town hire a consultant to support a Town-wide strategy for energy production and conservation including regulations.
  - b. Per the Chair's recommendation, a motion was made by Kristen and duly seconded by Tom for the town manager to hire an energy consultant to aid with strategic energy planning for Bridgewater.
    - i. The motion passed unanimously for the Chair to send a letter to the Town Manager advising the same.

## H. Action Items

### a. Chair (Carlton) –

- i. Send a memo to the fire station building committee to consider PHIUS recommendation.
- ii. Prepare a letter recommending the hiring of an energy consultant.
- iii. Send a letter to the Town Council regarding the adoption of Specialize Code

### b. Co-Chair (Thomas) –

- i. Continue inquiring/making progress with Big Belly Solar
- ii. Connect with the broadcast station regarding public education opportunities.

### c. Secretary (Kristen) –

- i. Compiling a list of useful links for people to click on and check out (also a review of the draft reports and categorize them accordingly.)

**I. Future Topics**

- a. Solarization
- b. Public Outreach – via broadcast, video clips, PowerPoints, etc.

**J. Next Meeting Date – TBD, May - June**

**K. Adjournment of Meeting –**

*Carlton Hunt motioned to adjourn the meeting of the Energy Committee at 7:32 p.m. which was duly seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.*