

Tuesday, February 23, 2021

Montague Energy Committee

By Zoom, 4-5:30 PM

Present: Chris Mason, Ariel Elan, Tim Van Egmond, Jason Burbank. Sally Pick arrived late (4:14) after experiencing technical difficulties.

Chris facilitating; Tim taking minutes.

Approved minutes from Feb. 2, 2020.

Discussion with Town Planner Walter Ramsey about Green Communities Grant Application.

Walter is looking into three projects at this point:

1. WPCF lighting upgrades inside and out, new heat pump to replace old oil boiler.
2. Upgrade 17 municipal parking lot lights from halogen to LED, by Discovery Center.
3. Proposal being worked on: new HVAC at Millers Falls Library.

Total potential grant to town \$200,000.

Chris recommended having energy efficiency study done for WPCF building, Walter said he believes that's being done. Chris also recommended that Walter share U. Mass. Baseline Study with the engineers he's working with, especially with regard to the Millers Falls Library. Sally recommended having weatherization studies done at Millers Falls Library and Recreation Dept. building.

Chris recommended LED lights that are 3000K, a warm color. Walter will look into it. Jason recommended a better cut off than the acorn lights, which light up the sky. Chris said the International Dark-Sky Association has set up standards, look for lights that are "Dark-Sky compliant."

Approaches to improving ventilation in buildings

Tabled.

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State-level advocacy: Climate bill & Clean Energy & Climate Plan for 2030

Reviewed draft of letter to legislators Sally wrote. Discussion of change suggested by Chris to preserve language keeping biomass plants eligible for renewable energy credits only if they meet the current minimum efficiency standards required, as with a cogeneration or “trigen” plant. The committee collaborated on how to revise this language.

Deadline for comments on the Climate Plan has been extended to March 22. Sally will send Sierra Club review to Committee members.

Possibility of submitting a letter in support for the Net Zero Stretch Code.

Included in Climate bill letter draft.

EV Charging Station Grants

In an aside from his comments on the Green Communities grant application, Walter said he’s not currently looking into the new grant for EV charging stations at this point. They’re already funded through another program, plus he’s preparing an analysis of the existing chargers in town before considering more. Chris brought up possible benefit of level 3 fast charger close to Rte. 2, leased from a third party owner. Walter expressed openness to the idea.

Status reports

- **Renewable energy heating system for Sheffield/Hillcrest school buildings, CIC Assessment**
 - Ariel said if they’re patching rather than replacing the roof, there’s a need to check if it’s possible to still insulate under it. There was a first public mention at meeting that the future of school buildings is uncertain, District and School Committee need to look into that.
- **Outdoor lighting upgrades to LEDs**
Nothing new to report.
- **Status of adjustments to solar bylaws:**
Tabled.

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- **DPW Building:**
 - Jason has utility bills for building, hasn't yet fully analyzed. Distribution charge is low.
 - Chiller leak repaired last week, but still not working yet.
 - Ongoing controls issues still being worked through.

Tracking use of Massachusetts C-PACE: tabled

Announcements

Plan agenda for next meeting

Other topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of the meeting. Votes may be taken.

Action items:

- Sally will revise the bullet point for biomass in the letter in support of passing the MA climate legislation. She'll then send it to legislators and copy the Governor.
- Sally will send to the Energy Committee members the link for the Sierra Club's position on the Climate Plan.
- Sally will send in approved minutes from Feb. 2 meeting for posting
- Tim will prepare and send in agenda for next meeting.

Next meeting: Tuesday, Feb. 16th, 4pm.