Shelburne Energy Committee

Thursday, September 30, 2021

Present: Tom Johnson, John Walsh, Andrew Baker, Jeff Boettner

Introductions: Tom Johnson welcomed us and noted that John and Andrew and Tom are already appointed members of the Committee. Jeff said he would submit his request for appointment to the Select Board and agreed to participate as a guest until appointed.

Election of Officers: John Walsh nominated Tom Johnson to serve as Chair. Andrew Baker seconded. John and Andrew voted Aye. Tom abstained.

Committee Size: The group agreed on a committee membership of up to 7 people. Andrew said he would check with the Town Administrator to see if there is any problem with that limit. To recruit members Tom agreed to draft a news release to the Recorder and to the Town web site. They will post those pending review by the members.

UMASS Clean Energy Extension: Tom met on Zoom with Duane Breger, Lauren Mattison, and River Strong and discussed municipal and residential energy usage. They said that typically a municipality emits about 3-4% of carbon emissions and that is mostly from the schools. Mass Energy Insight catalogs municipal energy use data. Their data can be accessed by the Town Administrator once we appoint a committee rep to request it. John Walsh agreed to be the rep for Municipal Energy Use data. They suggested we need to do a better job educating Town residents about what a Green Community is, what the energy incentives are.

Tom suggested that once we decide on our objectives we should develop outreach materials that educate toward those goals.

The Extension is developing a Greenhouse Gas Inventory Tool for establishing a carbon footprint baseline and measuring improvements over time. We have that metric at the Municipal level, which is required for Green Communities.

The Extension is also testing a Solar Planning Tool Kit, which is being tested over 18 months in Wendell, Blandford. Includes steps including forming a Solar Committee, Making a site inventory, Developing a menu of financing options, and more

Jeff suggested reviving our Solarize project. Andrew mentioned that the list of contacts generated by Solarize is still ours and could be used for that project. Tom suggested inviting installers like Solar Flair to come and meet with us.

Congressman Neil: John Walsh spoke with Matt Russett (chief of staff) and got his leads on energy policy. John agreed to draft an introductory letter for Tom’s signature to invite Cong. Neil or his reps to a meeting to update us about federal legislation and opportunities they might help Shelburne with. If we could make Cowell Gym a shovel ready project we could take advantage of new infrastructure bill funding opportunities.

Cowell Gym: Andrew noted that Terry (Town Admin) is working with Climates By Pomeroy to get another estimate of what a cold climate heat pump system would cost. Tom agreed to follow up with Terry and noted that heating cost for the building is currently about $10k and electric is about one third of that. John questioned whether the mini-split technology is feasible at Cowell given the amount of heat loss in the building.

Andrew suggested connecting with FRCOG and Bob Dean’s regional Energy Committee to learn about funding opportunities and to check with Terry about the Town’s ARRA funding allocation. If we have more than one funding source, the Cowell might be a more feasible project.

John believes that the Cowell consultant still owes us a final report. Tom will check with Terry on that and follow up to see if we can get a final report.

Tom noted that the Cowell roof is over 5 years old (2011) and thus, according to Energy Resources USA advice to Terry (Town Administrator), not suitable for solar installation.

New Business: The group agreed to meet monthly on 3rd Thursdays at 7pm, and to adjust to meet more frequently as needed, if there are projects and grant deadlines that need attention. Our next meetings are presently scheduled for October 21, November 18, and December 16.

Adjourned at 8:15 pm