

TOWN OF BECKET
ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING
October 24, 2023, 4 PM
Minutes

In attendance (via Zoom): Garth Klimchuk (Chairman), Susan Purser (Secretary); (in-person) Julie Craumer, Al Blake.

Absent: Cathy DeFoe (Vice-Chairman); Katherine Warden (Town Administrator)

1. Called meeting to order at 4:05pm
2. Approved minutes of September 19, 2023 meeting – Garth, Susan, Al and Julie.
3. New Committee Member - Julie Craumer has been approved by the Select Board to become a member of the Energy Committee. She is a Becket resident and the Director of Weatherization for BCAC with knowledge of various energy programs particularly for the environmental justice community. The Committee is pleased to welcome Julie to it. An alternate position is still open and members will continue to look for a person with some background in the energy field.
4. Wind Turbine Project Status - a.) Eversource is now asking for a site plan for the turbine project as part of the interconnection application. Cathy has asked Megan Amsler, the site assessment consultant, to include this in her scope of work. Cathy has set up the billing to pay the consultant. The contract originally set a deadline of 60 days (mid-November) for completion of the assessment report but a 30-day extension to mid-December has been granted to Megan for medical reasons. This should still allow ample time to prepare the Green Communities' grant application for the April 2024 deadline.

Al mentioned that there is another META grant deadline in February and that we could apply for a site assessment for a solar project at Town Hall. Al has Becket listed with the U.Mass assessment project but it could be some time before they could do it. At Julie's suggestion, Susan got the name of the solar contractor, Sunbug Solar, who installed the panels at the Windsor Town Hall as he will have experience dealing with municipal solar

projects. Susan will contact them with an invitation to attend our November meeting.

Al reminded us that an RFP process is required so we would need multiple responses from several solar contractors. Cathy agreed at the last meeting to talk to Kathe Warden regarding the steps involved in creating RFPs and RFSs.

5. Joint Letter re MassSave - Julie read her draft letter from BCAC and the Energy Committee which reminds local low income households of the MassSave program and its benefits. The Committee members felt it was a strong letter and approved it to go to the next step of review with BCAC and Kathy Warden. After approval, we hope it will be sent out to residents next month. Sherdyl Fernandez-Aubert of BRPC said last month that his agency could fund the mailing after he gets an invoice. Julie also mentioned that BCAC has not received any fuel assistance funds for the community yet.

The Committee also discussed sending out a second letter to remind residents about the R2 rate for low and moderate income households and the savings available through community solar.

6. Sunwealth Community Solar – The Committee discussed the Sunwealth program and the concept of community solar. Al is a proponent and has two or three friends who have applied. It is a program in which residents can save up to 25% on their electricity bills by “buying into” a new solar installation. Sunwealth is focusing on EJ households for these significant savings. There is no credit check, no cancellation fee and can work with fuel assistance. It was proposed that Sunwealth send out an informational letter with the Energy Committee’s endorsement.

Next steps: 1.) The committee needs to check with the Town to see if we are able to endorse a for-profit company; 2.) Have Sean Howe of Sunwealth send us a sample copy of the two bills so we can get a better idea of the concept; 3.) Decide if we do a joint letter with First Community of BRPC re Sunwealth and HomeWorks. The Committee will wait until next meeting when these issues are clarified.

7. Next month - 1.) review the Energy Committee website and 2.) discuss how to demonstrate public support for the wind turbine project as recommended by the wind consultant.

8. Next meeting: Tuesday, November 21, 2023, 4 PM, In person and via Zoom.
9. Adjourned at 5:10pm.

DocuSigned by:

J. Garth Klimchuk

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J. Garth Klimchuk, Chairman