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Dennis Alternative Energy Committee
April 3, 2023
Final Minutes

Members Present: Mike Sarli, John Benker, Mark Lambdin, and David SanClemente via Zoom, and Susan Klein via telephone
Members Absent: Lyn Solomon and David Langan (alternate)
Others Present: Tom O'Connor (DPW Deputy Director and Committee Liaison, Ken McAloon (Dennis Climate and Coastal Resiliency Advisory Committee); Carlyn Carey; Sheryl McMahon.

A quorum was declared.

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Chairman Mike Sarli at 5:02

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

None

APPROVAL OF MARCH 6, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

Motion: Move to approve minutes of the March 6, 2023 meeting as corrected. Motion made by John., seconded by David L. Approved unanimously

ANTICIPATED BUSINESS

Green Communities and Other Municipal Updates

Updates were provided by Tom.

• **Pilot Charging Station Project**

Tom reported that the Select Board voted to support the warrant article for the EV Charging Station Pilot and congratulated all involved for getting to this point.

• **Green Communities**

Tom reported that he had his monthly discussion with Cape Light Compact today:

➤ **Lighting Upgrades at Town Buildings**

Tom reported that several light fixtures in the police station and in the library were overlooked when the upgrades were done. Rise Engineering will go back and complete the work. Cape Light Compact will check to see whether these will be covered under Green Communities. If not, it should only be a small charge. Mark asked whether we had signed up for a certain number of fixtures or just to have the buildings done. Tom responded that he had signed up for a list of fixtures which, in hind sight, may not have been comprehensive enough.

➤ **Comprehensive Assessment of Town Buildings**

The request for use of Green Communities monies to fund a comprehensive study of town buildings was submitted to DOER and it was turned down. Tom has requested the official rationale for the denial. He expects to have that information in the next few weeks. \$120K had been allocated for the survey. Once he hears back from DOER, Tom will be able to determine whether we will pursue this idea any further. **Once he receives the DOER answer, he will share it with the Committee.**

Susan suggested that if Power Options would be a likely candidate for conducting such a study, they might have suggestions on how the study might be funded. Mark responded that Power Options has already suggested that they have a way for us to go through a formal Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC) process. The process involves two passes. The first of these passes is for free. They would come in and do an initial audit of all the structures in the Town. It would report on the amount of energy we are using now and project the energy savings they believe they could achieve. The second phase would be an energy grade audit in which they actually count electrons and guarantee the performance of the project. He noted that Power Options is familiar with this process and he believes that they have a way of reaching out for funding. They already have approved vendors for undertaking an ESPC process. He also suggested that we look into the Solar Special Revenue Fund as a possible mechanism for funding the study.

➤ **Reassessing Priorities for the Remainder of the Designation Grant and Beyond**

If the study is a no-go, Priorities will be reassessed as to how the remainder of the Designation Grant will be spent. Among the options: upgrade of lighting in the remainder of Town buildings (\$60-70K); HVAC system at the Dennis Pines (with some contribution from Cape Light Compact), and; the Energy Management Systems(EMS) at the library. The remainder of the Designation Grant should be exhausted by the first two. This will open the door for us to apply for a follow-on competitive grant.

Mike asked Tom if, when the time comes, he would give the Committee a heads up on the DPW's thoughts on future stand-alone grants and let us know if the Committee can be helpful in doing background research/legwork.

Sub-Committee Updates:

• **Charging Station Pilot Project**

➤ **Select Board Presentation (March 14, 2023)**

Mike indicated that the meeting went well and summarized:

- ∴ Tom, Mike, Mark and Susan attended the meeting in person
- ∴ Tom and Mike summarized the charts and made the presentation
- ∴ There was some discussion by the Select Board
- ∴ Greg Rounseville suggested that they move on to the wording of the warrant article. Selectman Plath asked the rationale for the \$25K figure which Greg explained. Tom noted that Greg had been a good advocate for us on this project.
- ∴ The wording of the warrant article was approved.

Mike indicated that the next step would be a review by the Finance Committee. Tom offered that this review is expected to take place in the next two weeks. Mike asked who would be making the Fin Com presentation for the article. It was not yet clear. Susan noted that regardless of who was doing the presentation, it would be important for as many of us as possible show up to show our support. **Tom will find out the date of the Fin Com meeting and let Mike know and Mike, in turn, will get word out to the Committee.**

➤ **Eversource Make Ready Program**

Mohammed Faiz from Voltrek had contacted Tom and Mike with regard to moving forward with the Make Ready program. On March 13, Mike had informed him that there were a number of approvals necessary before we take any concrete steps. Neither Tom nor Mike have heard from him since. Tom allowed as how if we hear from him again we can tell him that we'll have a better answer after the Town Meeting in May and if it passes, then we will have to go through the procurement process.

Susan noted that the Make Ready program had, at times, been referred to as a grant, but it was not a grant at all. No money changes hands. If qualified, Eversource contracts directly with a third-party to perform the work required. This point may need to be made clear to the Fin Com.

• **Solar Installation at the Highland Golf Course**

➤ **Master Plan for Solar Town-Wide**

Mark reported that there were enough people around town that think they want solar that the sub-committee is inclined to make a recommendation that the Town try to engage a third-party solar expert to evaluate what we have and how we might best move forward. He suggested that, now that we seem to be over the hump with the EV chargers, the Committee turn our attention to what we might do about a solar consultant and what we need to do to ask for one. He was fairly sure that we should be able to fund this from the Green Communities grant. Someone will have to determine what the cost/benefit is in order to know how far we go with this. Part of that calculation includes the awareness that the Town can now produce (and sell) more electricity than it uses, the plan would have to include what we do with the income from that rather than just let it revert to the General Fund. Mark wondered whether it would be necessary to go to Town Meeting to hire such a consultant. It was agreed that this warranted further investigation.

Mike summarized:

∴ Plan A, that ideally, Green Communities monies would be used to do an evaluation identifying all the sites around town amenable to putting in a solar installation (ground-mounted, roof-mounted or solar canopy) and coming up with a master plan to lease the real estate at select Town facilities to a developer to do so. Then the Committee would come up with practical and useful ways to use the revenue from the lease fees.

- ∴ Plan B, to go to Power Options to see if they had a program that would cover the costs of a consultant
- ∴ Plan C, to go to Town Meeting with a warrant article to secure the funds to cover the hiring of a consultant

Tom will contact Margaret Song to see whether Green Communities might cover the development of a town-wide master plan.

Discussion points:

- ∴ Dave S. noted that the beaches, both south and north, would be good candidates for a solar canopy. The Town could add an additional fee for parking under a canopy, such as \$5, that could help defray the costs.
- ∴ Mark noted that, with enough surface area covered by a canopy, together with battery storage, we could install EV charging stations in places where we couldn't put them otherwise.
- ∴ Both Mark and Mike recalled that, in their travels, seeing canopies over parking lots that simply provided shade and now have the opportunity of both providing shade and generating power.
- ∴ Mike again suggested that in any proposal we might make, it could include the stipulation that some portion of the revenue generated by the solar projects should be set aside to pay the salary of a parttime energy officer. He noted that when he and Mark bounced this idea off Selectman John Terrio, he seemed receptive.

- **Residential Wind**

Dave S. reported that in his research, everything he has found so far has involved connecting to battery storage. He hasn't found a good product that can be connected to the grid allowing for net-metering. He has been monitoring the internet frequently for any new developments.

Mark commented that we shouldn't dismiss the idea of battery storage; using battery storage would ease the load on the grid. For instance, if we could get 24 hours-worth of battery storage at Town Hall, either from wind or solar, it would be highly desirable since, in the case of a power outage, Eversource wouldn't allow us to backfeed into the grid. Mike allowed as how there is local precedent and expertise, citing the back-up battery system installed at DY so that it can be used as an emergency site in case of a storm-driven power outage. Dave S. noted that the biggest back-up battery in the country is in Provincetown. In the case of a power outage, the battery can provide power to the entire town for nearly 24 hours.

Format for Future Meetings

Mike reported that the Governor has signed legislation that extends the emergency provisions put in place during COVID that will allow us to continue to hold our meeting up to and including 100% via Zoom and still comply with open meeting laws. This extension is good until the end of March 2025. The Town Clerk has sent out 3 optional agenda formats for announcing the

meeting: in person; 100% video, and; hybrid. He asked for input from the Committee members on their preferred meeting format going forward. The consensus was that being able to meet via Zoom provided flexibility to members who are still working or travel for various reasons. Recordings from Zoom meetings facilitate writing up the meeting minutes. The plan going forward is that 100% Zoom will be the default but to decide each month whether the next meeting will be 100% Zoom or hybrid. Sheryl McMahon noted that, under the open meeting laws, we were free to decide the format on a monthly basis without a formal vote.

Future Objectives or Projects

Previous discussions indicated that, in the immediate future, the Committee will focus on:

1. Getting the EV charging station pilot project in place
2. Keeping an eye on residential wind technology
3. Broadening the plan for Highlands Golf Course solar to a town-wide master plan

UNANTICIPATED BUSINESS

Mike noted that Julie Kenny has stepped down as the chair of the Dennis Climate and Coastal Resiliency Advisory Committee and asked Ken McAloon if the committee was still looking for a chair. Ken responded that they have a temporary chair serving through June. **For the time being Mike will continue to send the agenda to Ken and Julie, and Susan will continue to send the minutes to them as well.**

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Move to adjourn. Motion made by Mark; seconded by Dave S. Vote: unanimous
Adjourned: 6:00 pm.