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Dennis Town Clerk
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**Dennis Alternative Energy Committee
May 1, 2023
Final Minutes**

Members Present: Mike Sarli, John Benker, Susan Klein, Mark Lambdin, Lyn Solomon and David Langan (alternate) via Zoom
Members Absent: David SanClemente
Others Present: Tom O'Connor (DPW Deputy Director and Committee Liaison), Carlyn Carey.

A quorum was declared.

CALL TO ORDER

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

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Carlyn Carey joined the meeting via Zoom and later by call-in. Mike asked her if she had any questions or comments. She had none.

APPROVAL OF APRIL 3, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

Motion: Move to approve minutes of the April 3, 2023 meeting as amended. Motion made by John, seconded by David L. Approved unanimously

Mark noted that it would be helpful to have the minutes far enough in advance that anyone who was tasked with follow up would be reminded in time to do so. **Susan** agreed and **will try to get the proposed minutes distributed my mid-month.**

ANTICIPATED BUSINESS

Green Communities and Other Municipal Updates

Updates were provided by Tom.

• **Green Communities**

Tom reported that his monthly meeting with Cape Light Compact is scheduled for tomorrow.

➤ **Lighting Upgrades at Town Buildings**

He expects to receive the estimates for upgrading the lighting in the rest of the municipal buildings. Rise Engineering is waiting on prices for the last few fixtures.

➤ **Comprehensive Assessment of Town Buildings**

A short while ago, Tom forwarded to Mike the response from Cape Light Compact as to why DOER turned down the proposed use of the Green Communities Designation Grant to fund a comprehensive study of energy-saving opportunities in all town buildings.

Mike will distribute it to the rest of the Committee. Essentially, they wanted a much

more in-depth study to be performed and they may or may not pay for the lion's share of it either. The DPW still wants to go forward with this so will try to fund it another way, possibly with deferred maintenance monies or some other funds.

Tom deferred to Susan who had recently sent him information on possible funding sources. Susan explained that she had recently come across a brochure for Green Communities and noticed that they had several programs besides the grant programs we knew about—Designation Grants and competitive grants. She had forwarded a copy of the brochure to Tom and Mike and **Susan will send a copy of the brochure out to the rest of the Committee.**

One of these other programs is called Energy Management Services Technical Assistance (EMS) which assists municipalities to Implement energy savings measures without significant upfront capital. These are the performance contracts Mark has been telling us about for some time through which guaranteed energy savings pay for the cost of installing the energy savings measure. She wondered whether this program might be able to fund the assessment. **Tom will bring this up with Cape Light Compact at their meeting tomorrow.** Susan was surprised that the DOER response didn't say that the proposed study was not eligible under the Designation Grant but that they had other programs that might cover this. Seems as if the left hand doesn't know what the right hand was doing.

Mike opined that this was yet another reason why having a part-time energy officer who could keep track of these different funding mechanisms and programs such as the parttime energy officer position they have in Brewster. In this regard, Susan added that each round of acceptances into Green Communities has slightly different things that the grants can pay for. Dennis was accepted under Round 13. In the Round 13 guidelines, there is mentioned that you can use Green Communities monies to pay for the seed money for hiring an energy planner. Susan thought that this was how Brewster brought on their energy officer, paying for the first year salary until their permanent funding mechanism became available—i.e. a portion of the funds generated from the lease of golf course parking lot to a solar canopy developer.

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

Given the response from the DOER, Tom and Mike Lavin have decided to use the remaining Designation Grant funds—about \$120K—for lighting upgrades at the rest of the town-owned buildings. Whatever money is left after the lighting upgrades will go toward replacement of the heating system at Dennis Pines Golf Course.

Tom will put together a set of notes from his meeting with Cape Light Compact and send them to Mike. Mike will circulate the notes to the rest of the Committee.

Sub-Committee Updates:

- **Charging Station Pilot Project**

- **Article 20 for the May 2, 2023 Annual Town Meeting**

- ∴ The Finance Committee voted to support the article 6-1-0
- ∴ Susan had taken the initiative to write up a brief supporting statement which Mike had then passed to Tom and Greg Rounseville for review. Greg did a rewrite of the statement which Mike forwarded to the rest of the Committee
- ∴ Susan had contacted Town Hall to find out who from the Select Board would be presenting the article so we could coordinate with him. She was told that it would be Chris Lambton. Susan spoke with Chris to find out what his plans were for the presentation. She found that he was very enthusiastic about the project and had a good grasp of subject. He felt that because the Select Board voted unanimously and the Fin Com voted 6 to 1, the article should pass with little or no discussion. Chris suggested that, pending confirmation from the AEC, he would do the substantive presentation and members of the AEC would be waiting in the wings to answer relevant questions or concerns, should the present themselves. Mike suggested that we let Chris know that if there was anything that came up that he was not comfortable dealing with, he could relinquish the floor to a member of the AEC. Susan added that if someone asks a question at Town Meeting, there was no obligation for anyone to answer it. Mike added that we would only respond if there was an important error in fact. Susan noted that she had sent Chris a copy of what she had written and told him he could use all, some or none of it. **It was the consensus of the Committee that Susan should contact Chris tomorrow to let him know that we agreed with the plan as discussed.**
- ∴ Mike wondered whether we should forward Greg's rewrite to Chris as well. Susan felt that the rewrite emphasized side issues that may have been important for the Select Board and Fin Com to know but presented details that were pretty much irrelevant for the Town Meeting assembly in their decision-making. She recommended that we not confuse the issue by forwarding Greg's rewrite.
- ∴ Susan recommended that Committee members who are attending the Town Meeting should sit together near an aisle and near a microphone should we need to clarify anything that is said. Mark recommended that Mike, as chair, should be the person to respond if necessary. Mike countered that it should be the person with the most factual knowledge, depending on the issue, and that would be himself, Susan or Tom. Tom, who is not a Dennis resident, does not plan to be there, leaving Mike and Susan as the designated hitters.

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

- **Master Plan for Solar Town-Wide**

Mark recommended that we hang fire until we get the issue of a solar consultant under control so there won't be duplication of effort. He had contacted Greg Rounseville asking how we could get a consultant on board. Greg had no thoughts on the matter. Mark plans to follow up with one of the Select Board members.

Mike suggested that he talk to Margaret Song at Cape Light Compact because she is so knowledgeable in the solar field. Tom reported that Margaret has taken on different roles at Cape Light Compact and is not really involved with us anymore. Her replacement is Laura Selmer who Tom reports is pretty knowledgeable and will be a good asset for us. **Tom will make the funding for an energy consultant a topic for his meeting tomorrow and will report back.** Mike asked Tom whether he would also ask Laura whether she could sit in on one of our meetings in the near future just to do an introduction.

Susan brought up one of the other Green Communities programs called the Municipal Energy Technical Assistance (META) grant program which provides funds to support clean energy projects at public facilities. These include feasibility studies for zero-net energy construction, engineering studies, and assistance with solar PV development. The latter might be an option for funding the town-wide study of solar opportunities.

- **Residential Wind**

No discussion

UNANTICIPATED BUSINESS

- **Solar Canopies with Battery Back-Up at Beaches**

As an aside at the April meeting, Mark wondered whether it would be possible to erect a solar canopy with battery storage at more remote sites like beach parking lots and run EV chargers off of the battery. Susan followed up with one of her contacts at ChargePoint, Chris Nihan, who answered that this was indeed technically possible. When we next update our town-wide charging station plan, we may want to think about some of the sites we didn't consider before because they weren't grid accessible.

Mike added that this got him thinking about the Town's off-the-grid restroom facilities at beaches. They are stand-alone with solar collectors on the roof, a small battery and the whole thing runs on 12 or 24 volts. Could we put up solar canopies over the parking lots so that the beach-goers can get into a cool car and, at the same time, run the concessions and restrooms from the power generated. Tom noted that in the restrooms, there are only a couple of lights and an exhaust fan.

Dave asked how well these might survive winter storms. Mike allowed as how the design of a canopy at the golf course would be different from one at the beach.

- **Solar Array at the Police Station**

Susan noted that the solar array on the roof of the police station has been in place for 13 years. At the time it was put up, it was generating something like 3% of the power used at the police station. She asked whether anyone knew if it was still functioning at all. Because we own these panel outright, there is no company currently responsible for monitoring the panels' efficacy. Susan reminded that when they were first installed, the company that installed them had a link to a website that would allow anyone to monitor production live. However, this website link ceased to function within about 9 months of installation so we have no idea what the production is currently. Mark allowed as how that information is probably captured on the Schedule Z every year. **Tom will follow up on the extent to which these panels are still producing.** Mark suggested that this would be one more thing the solar consultant would look at. John added that with the newer technology, panels could probably be added to the north-facing side of the roof as well.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Move to adjourn. Motion made by Lyn; seconded by John. Vote: unanimous

Adjourned: 5:53 pm.