

Sustainability Committee
Minutes of Meeting
October 17, 2012

Present: Lynn Stoddard (chair), Bill Lennon, Matt Hart, Paul Shapiro, Julie Sherman, Rich Miller, Kate Donnelly (guest), Linda Painter (staff), Virginia Walton (staff), Lon Hultgren (staff)

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 by chair Stoddard.

Introductions were made.

The September 19, 2012 meeting minutes were accepted on a motion by Shapiro/Sherman.

Hart gave an update on the school building project. The Town Council has asked the project team to research two issues and to report back to the Council by the end of the calendar year. These two issues: 1) explore the possibility of building the new schools in a sequential fashion, as opposed to concurrently, to determine how this would impact project debt service payments; and 2) meet with our state legislators to determine what would be required to obtain a waiver or exemption to allow the Town to satisfy the criteria to receive reimbursement under the removal-like-new program. The project team is working on these issues and will report back to the Council by the end of the year.

Hart gave an update on the Mansfield Hollow Hydro project. The most recent proposal from owners Sam and Michael Shifrin proposes that the Town enter into a purchase power agreement (PPA) to purchase electricity from Mansfield Hollow Hydro LLC for a 20-year term. Along with the PPA, Mansfield Hollow Hydro LLC would also be entitled to property tax relief. One to five years into the contract, the agreement would convert to a purchase and sale structure under which the PPA would be extended to 30 years and the Town would assume ownership of Mansfield Hollow Hydro LLC. Under this arrangement, Mansfield Hollow Hydro LLC would retain all liability for its operations and own the renewable energy credits (RECs) produced by the facility. The Town's special legal counsel has reviewed this proposal and raised three questions: Can the energy be provided at a competitive rate? Will the state allow virtual net metering, where the utility would give the Town credit for the energy that the Mansfield Hollow Hydro produces? What kind of liability would the Town assume by owning Mansfield Hollow Hydro? These questions have been forwarded to the Shifrins for their comments. Hart added that the Town's current electric contract, through the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM), ends in December 2014.

Kate Donnelly, recently hired by the Neighbor to Neighbor Energy Challenge, stated that she is seeking volunteers in Mansfield to help the Town reach its goal of 10% of the population reducing energy consumption by 20% by April 2013. The committee suggested that she work with town staff and volunteers from the Energy Education Team.

The committee discussed the role of the Mansfield Energy Education Team. It was decided that the viability and focus of the group should be left to its members. Members of the Team are encouraged to participate in the sustainability committee meetings.

Painter stated that a contract has just been signed with Goodie Clancy, the team of professionals hired to work on the HUD grant. They plan to produce all their deliverables in two years, so they will be working on several aspects of the grant simultaneously. More information, and possibly action items, will be brought to next month's meeting.

Miller circulated a UConn bike friendly campus outline. The discussion of a bike friendly community was tabled until next month's meeting.

Walton announced that the Town's four electric car charging stations in the new parking garage are operational and the one charging station outside of the Community Center will be soon. The UConn car sharing program is ready to expand to the Town's parking garage. One of the car shares will be an electric vehicle. In addition, the Town Manager will be receiving a plug-in electric hybrid through the State's Alternative Fuel Vehicle program. As all these pieces are coming together, Walton has begun working on a press event, and the committee may be called upon to participate. Stoddard will find out who owns electric vehicles in the community so that they can be invited to the press event. She will also find out if DEEP Commissioner Esty is available to participate.

Walton circulated Don Hoyle's letter to the sustainability committee about his interest in having the proposed transmission lines buried underground. It was stated that not only has the time period for proposing options lapsed, but none of the other towns affected by this upgrade showed interest in a burial option.

Agenda items for the next meeting include bike friendly community, review of municipal energy data and the HUD grant.

Meeting adjourned 6:30 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for November 14, 2012.

Respectfully Submitted,

Virginia Walton