

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

Montague Energy Committee

By Zoom, 4-5:30 PM

Present: Chris Mason, Sally Pick, Ariel Elan, Pam Hanold, Tim Van Egmond,
Guest: Bob Rueter, former energy auditor in Brattleboro.

Chris facilitating; Sally taking minutes.

Approved minutes from Feb. 2, March 16, & April 21, 2021

State-level energy-related policies & legislation

- Discussed proposed changes to the MA Department of Energy Resources' (DOER) Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS).
 - Assuming the comment deadline has not passed, MEC approved revising Northampton's comment letter on proposed changes to biomass plant regulations, to be sent to DOER & the chairs and vice chairs of the MA legislative Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, & Energy (TUE), from the Montague Energy Committee.

Energy-related Facility Updates: no new report.

Stretch code

- Sally and Chris explained their understanding of the Net Zero Stretch Energy Code and the update on the current stretch code.
 - DOER is updating the current stretch code to be close to net zero this year; any community, including Montague, that has adopted the stretch code, will automatically adopt this new stretch code.
- MEC could advocate to DOER for a strong *Net Zero* Stretch Energy Code, as DOER works on coming up with a definition of net zero within the period required by the legislation of 18 months from July 2021.
 - MEC will continue to discuss comments on the definition of net zero energy that it may submit to DOER.
- Once the Net Zero Stretch Energy Code been established, MEC could advocate for Montague adopting this optional, opt-in code.

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Reexamining Solar Bylaws for large scale facilities

- Northampton is identifying champion trees and other special protected resources that prevent PV development.
- Sally referred MEC to DOER Model Zoning for the Regulation of Solar Energy Systems suggestions: solar overlay districts, siting preferences.
 - MEC agreed that the model zoning wording has no teeth.
- Land trust site maps of land uses, habitats, and ecosystems may be useful to the Town for identifying land and special resources to protect and good locations for future solar development.
- MEC will invite Walter to a meeting to discuss zoning questions and explore ways to further protect forests and other land areas vulnerable to solar development.

Announcements

- Sally reported that Julie Cowan referred MEC back to Nova Motorcycles for updates on C-PACE. She is not able to share information about C-PACE requests, applications, etc.

Plan agenda for next meeting

**Other topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of the meeting.
Votes may be taken.**

Action items:

- Tim will send 3 approved minutes to planning department for online posting.
- If the deadline for submitting comments has not passed, Sally will revise Northampton's letter to DOER about the proposed changes to the RPS biomass regulations.
- Chris will invite Walter Ramsey to a MEC meeting to discuss solar siting and zoning considerations, as MEC explores how to further protect forested and other special natural resources from solar development.
- Pam will look at land trust maps to see if they could be of use for informing zoning changes related to solar development and protecting forests and other special natural resources.

Next meeting: Tuesday, June 15, 2021, 4-5:30pm