

LINCOLN GREEN ENERGY COMMITTEE

Minutes

Thursday, December 8, 2016 | 8-9:30 a.m.
Lincoln Town Offices

Present: Jennifer Haugh, Jim Hutchinson, Sue Klem, Ed Lang, Jennie Morris, David O'Neil, John Snell (chair), Jonathan Soo

I. State of the Town meeting recap / municipal solar PV follow-up

Hutchinson was pleased to report positive feedback regarding municipal solar. The State of the Town meeting portion on solar PV bore no new concerns or complaints.

New state incentives that would replace the current state renewable energy credit (SREC) program have not yet been laid out. Hutchinson has been in discussions with Sandra Brown of BlueWave, Lincoln's financing partner, to get further details on how the timing of the projects' implementations might align with available incentives, but BlueWave will be unable to provide any firm details until the new State incentive program is announced. The general sense is that the project may not yield as much in terms of financial savings that the original proposal offered, but would provide parity with existing electrical rates and have a positive environmental impact.

The Conservation Commission meets next week and is scheduled to vote on official removal of the Lincoln Transfer Station landfill from conservation land designation—an exception to Article 97—making it available for the 1-MW solar array currently under consideration. The measure requires unanimous approval from the Conservation Commission before it can go before the Selectmen for approval.

Discussion followed. Hutchinson reiterated that there were many moving parts involved with the landfill solar PV installation, one of which being the acceptance of the seven-acre Wang property as a substitution for the conservation land lost from solar development on the landfill. The swap would not be considered precedent setting for the Conservation Commission.

Snell mentioned that the solar working group's blueprint had undergone additional edits since the State of the Town meeting. He thanked everyone who had been involved in working on municipal solar for the past several of years.

II. Upcoming Planning Board and Capital Committee meetings

Lincoln's Capital Committee has invited GEC to attend next week, which is an opportunity for the Green Energy Committee to bring up funding needs for upcoming projects. Snell mentioned the potential need for funding to address some municipal energy-efficiency issues through planned maintenance and retrofitting, such as at the library and Town Offices, etc., and the municipal vehicular fleet.

Morris and Haugh offered to compile and share information they had found on green vehicle programs to help the Capital Committee anticipate potential energy-saving opportunities and costs.

Lang mentioned that while the Town Offices building had been outfitted with gas metering and

other energy-savings capabilities, the contractor assigned to the job hadn't completed the task. In addition, the building uses more energy it should. New funding is needed to get the building operating at its installed efficiency capacity.

Lang added that a dashboard feature was once available for the Town Offices building, but that it had stopped working eight or nine months ago. He said it was on [Town Facilities Manager] Michael Haines's list of to-do items.

Snell asked if Lang and Soo could work together on our Town's energy monitoring capabilities. They will meet in the next couple weeks.

Lincoln's Planning Board meets next week and is scheduled to discuss revisions to the Town's bylaws regarding solar. At issue is current setback rules on private property, which are considered too restrictive; bylaws revisions would provide for review on a case-by-case basis. Should a property fall within a historic district, the Lincoln Historical Commission would also need to weigh in. Klem and Morris felt that LHC members were generally supportive of residential solar and would be willing to work with homeowners on what's appropriate.

III. Minutes of November 3, 2016

The minutes of November 3 were unanimously approved as amended.

IV. Solarize Mass

Morris reported that in 2012, Lincoln joined forces with Wayland and Sudbury to enlist the services of Solarize Mass, which created a marketing campaign to use a joint procurement process for residential solar. There were 32 contracts signed in Lincoln, 31 in Sudbury, and 74 in Wayland.

Wayland contacted Sudbury and Lincoln to assess the level of interest in a new joint Solarize MA proposal. The State is offering rolling admission to 10 communities in 2017. This year, Solarize Mass is offering a program called Solarize Plus, which gives towns the option to choose one of three new programs: solar thermal, air-sourced heat pumps, or support for electric vehicles. The three-town consortium would need to agree on which program they would like to pursue.

A discussion followed as to what Solarize Mass could offer vs. Co-op Power or Sun Power, which is essentially the same—each group is a marketing program for green energy incentives offered through MassCEC. Morris said the idea is to enlist an exclusive installer, and perhaps there are advantages or discounts from aggregation.

Hutchinson pointed out that a different program, Solar Access Program, separates out the components of solar that might be barriers for entry in some cases: (1) where do panels go? (2) how are they funded? (3) who gets the benefit(s)? He suggested that combining a Solarize Mass effort with Solar Access Program might capture additional potential solar customers who might have the means to pursue one avenue, but not another. The group assumes that the state's solar incentive program will be clear by the time a new residential solar program is implemented. Lang suggested that perhaps the Lincoln GEC could play a role in helping residents navigate the many options for solar.

Snell asked that Morris, Klem, Hutchinson and others meet separately (perhaps in January) to discuss Solarize Mass and similar options further.

V. Lincoln Energy Challenge updates

Klem first mentioned that she learned that Mothers Out Front was pushing for National Grid to test for gas leaks.

So far, Co-op Power has unfortunately not provided HEA data, and they have also been unable to account for the \$1500 they accepted from Lincoln for marketing efforts. She will continue pressing for details.

Klem mentioned that residents were getting constant phone calls from competing utility providers, offering alternatives to Eversource, but that providers weren't necessarily offering options that were cleaner energy. This might be a good opportunity to introduce to Lincoln residents the option of municipal choice, or municipal aggregation: where Lincoln residents are given a default electricity provider that offers 100% renewable energy at a rate made more reasonable by aggregation. A discussion followed regarding the best way to communicate this option, such as by way of survey (which may not capture the opinions of many who would opt not to take it) or invitation to open discussion. Snell suggested we start with a simple fact sheet, perhaps publicized through a letter to the editor of the Squirrel or the like.

Regarding Lincoln Energy Challenge efforts, Klem said that Mark Deck had been interviewing known recipients of the HEAs via Co-op and HomeWorks, applying his management consulting background to develop insights on how consumers might be encouraged to pursue further energy efficiency measures as recommended through the audits. A separate meeting for the Lincoln Energy Challenge is to take place on Friday, December 9 at 4 p.m. in Town Offices.

Klem said the grant proposal for National Grid had been sent, requesting funding to assist with publicity and marketing efforts for the Lincoln Energy Challenge through 2017. She will likely hear of awards by spring.

VI. Other

Haugh built two sandwich boards over the weekend, which will help with signage and publicity in the future. She will keep them at her house until they are needed.

VIII. Adjournment

Hutchinson moved to adjourn. Lang seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 9:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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