

Approved with corrections 11/10/2020

Energy Committee Meeting
October 14, 2020 7:00 P.M.
Google Meet Virtual Meeting

Present: Conrad Liebenow, Renee Schmidt, Matt Stowell, Tim Walter, Judy Williams

The meeting convened at 7:10 PM. Tim read the minutes of the September meeting and corrected Heat Smart from Heat Save. The minutes were unanimously approved as corrected. Conrad reported on John Whalen's response regarding putting solar panels on the roof of the picnic pavilion. John indicated a list of materials needed with no cost estimate. Conrad's guesstimate for materials is in the range of \$2800 plus \$2000 for trusses which adds up to roughly \$5000.

Matt, "Why is there no interest in ground mounted solar?" Tim, "Behind the pavilion would interfere with Labor Day and other activities and at the Safety Complex and Highway Garage they would interfere with the movement of vehicles.

Would the Green Community Grant pay for the cost of solar panels on the pavilion? Yes, Renee & Conrad.

Matt, "Is it two separate contracts for the Pavilion?" We would put it out as one but the solar company would need a subcontractor.

Conrad, "In a day or two we will have a materials quote from Cummington Supply for the wooden tresses in order for a contractor to have a reliable estimate." We would need 13 trusses and they would look just like the present ones. The beams on each side to support the trusses are insufficient, the outer would remain in place and the inner would be replaced. The beams are 48 feet in length and perhaps should be split in two pieces. Conrad indicated that there are a few holes in the metal roof of the pavilion but he did not think that was a concern.

A discussion of the difference between designated grants and competitive grants indicated that the former was for solar and the latter for energy conservation. Matt, "What is the procedure for us to move ahead?" The Building Committee must agree for energy conservation measures like heat pumps and winterizing. Eversource will provide 70% of funding towards heat pumps and does not require that a municipality get fossil fuel from them. The present existing furnace should remain as a backup if heating pumps are insufficient. Tim asked, "Are municipalities eligible for energy credits from the state for heat pumps?"

Tim, "I would ask for a memo of understanding that we are going to install solar before energy conservation in buildings due to the lack of access in the buildings because of Covid 19. We need to get moving as other towns, like Windsor, already have heat pumps in their municipal buildings.

Renee, "We need a plan for more than solar. Can we do energy conservation measures at Hathaway Hall? I do ECMs every day and could easily do them for Hathaway Hall." Conrad, "Energy audits have been done for all the municipal buildings in Plainfield and I will send them to the members of the Energy Committee. I will, also, send the cost estimates from Tom Bowman." Renee, "I can tell if the estimates are in the ball park."

Conrad, "I am working on the annual report and will send it out. The energy reduction plan is awkward to work on."

Tim, "I will contact Peter Lapointe, the new chair of the Building Committee, so we can meet with the members of the Building Committee."

Tim, "I recently met with members of the Worthington Select Board regarding Heat Smart. They agreed to go into partnership with other towns for a Heat Smart program. The town of Windsor is not enthusiastic since they already have heat pumps. I plan to go next to Plainfield and then to Cummington. Any more than 5 communities might be unmanageable but of course the more communities the more attractive to contractors. We can set up a structure now but no work until after Covid 19." Matt, "What can we do?" Tim, "Network and look for other towns that might join us."

Conrad presented a schematic of 15 communities in MA that have Heat Smart programs. The only western MA community was Great Barrington and the rest were in the eastern part of the state. The types of products that were installed were: airtsource water heaters; air source heat pumps; ground source heat pumps; solar hot water.

Judy moved that the meeting adjourn and Conrad seconded the motion, all were in favor.

Meeting adjourned: 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Judith Williams