

Minutes of Energy Committee Meeting Wed. January, 13, 2021 Via: Google Meet

Present: Conrad Liebenow, Renee Schmidt, Matt Stowell, Tim Walter, Judy Williams, Peter LaPointe (liaison from building committee)

The meeting convened at 7:01 P.M. Peter LaPointe explained that the the Building Committee wanted to support the Energy Committee. He mentioned that the Building Committee planned to do some fund raising and that perhaps the Energy Committee could be included. A priority is to replace the oil fired furnaces at the Town Hall with heat pumps because the exterior oil lines clog up with sludge.

Mark Rabinsky, Western MA Coordinator for the Green Communities, visited Plainfield recently, and was not impressed with using the pavilion for solar. Geoff Prost, a member of the Building Committee, obtained an estimate for reinforcing the pavilion for solar from his employer. Based upon John Wallen's design, Marois Construction quoted \$19,761 for labor. When added to the \$4,200 materials quote previously obtained by the Energy Committee, the estimate approaches \$24,000.

Mark asked members of the Energy Committee to prioritize their plans for energy efficiency. Prior to Mark becoming the Coordinator for the Green Communities the emphasis was on solar, it is now on (ECMS) energy conservation measures. ECMS do not necessarily equate with monetary savings.

Matt asked why ground mounted solar couldn't be used behind the town offices (Hallock Building). Members of the Energy Committee responded that the suggestion had been considered but dismissed because of aesthetic & space considerations.

Peter reminded the members that higher energy efficiency will generate more energy usage, especially for cooling at the town offices (Hallock Building). Peter strongly favors using solar at the Highway Dept. area which is used 365 days a year. Three phase power is already in place and he envisions putting solar between the highway garage and where two trucks and a grader are presently housed. A canopy could be erected to house the trucks and grader, and a shed constructed where gravel is currently stored.

Matt asked, "What could be done at the highway garage?" Conrad, "That is what we initially considered for energy savings and it triggered a structural evaluation." Peter, "The building committee is now prepared to go out to bid for more insulation for the highway garage." Renee, "There is a major difference of opinion as to how much insulation will impact the structural weight."

The conversation then shifted to the use of heat pumps. We need to provide environmental conditions that are safe for heat pumps and educate town members how to use them. Conrad, "The office at the highway garage would be a reasonable place for a heat pump."

Peter, "Hathaway Hall needs to be renovated and a special town meeting will be held to ask for money to be appropriated." The police chief needs an office space for confidentiality and an area (jail) to hold prisoners.

The conversation switched once more, this time to the town offices building (Hallock Building). Since it is a designated historic building there are important aesthetic concerns. In response to appearance of ductwork it was explained that most of the ductwork is in the floor and that the old ductwork was well designed and would not need to be replaced. Adding fresh air to the system is a simple low cost project. If heat pumps are added it would need a 200 amp panel and at present there is a 2-100 amp. Peter, "The town has money for COVID perhaps some of it could be applied for the cost of heat pumps that would improve the circulation of air within the building."

A suggestion was made to include all committee members on emails. A motion was made by Judy and seconded by Renee to adjourn the meeting at 8:29.

Respectfully submitted,
Judith Bryan Williams