

ENERGY COMMITTEE
TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR

Minutes

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February 8, 2022

1) Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

2) Roll Call

Members Present: Darrell Crowley, Director of Facility Operations, S.W. Public Schools
Hank Cullinane, Resident
Jeff Doolittle, Town Engineer, Public Works
Marek Kozikowski, Town Council
Athena Loukellis, Resident
James MacPherson, Resident
Andrew Paterna, Town Council
Chairperson Stephen Wagner, Resident

Members Absent: Larry Brown, Resident
Councilor Cesar Lopez, Town Council
Sherman Tarr, Resident

Others Present: Jim Sicord, Senior Energy Advisor, EnergySage

3) Approval of Minutes

No minutes available.

4) Next Meeting

Regular Meeting – March 8, 2022 in the Madden Room.

5) Business

- A. Election of Officers
 - a. Chair

Athena Loukellis nominated Andrew Paterna as the new Chairperson of the Energy Committee. Darrell Crowley seconded the nomination.

Darrell Crowley made a motion to close nominations. Hank Cullinane seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

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ITEM:

5. Business (*Continued*)

b. Vice Chair

Chairperson Stephen Wagner nominated Marek Kozikowski as the Vice Chair of the Energy Committee. Andrew Paterna seconded the nomination.

Chairperson Stephen Wagner made a motion to close nominations. Andrew Paterna seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

c. Secretary

Chairperson Stephen Wagner questioned whether there is a need to nominate a secretary. There has not been a secretary in the past because the Clerk of the Town Council assists the Energy Committee when needed. No one in the Energy Committee spoke up regarding the need of a secretary so the next topic was discussed.

d. Schedule a handoff session

Chairperson Stephen Wagner would like to schedule a meeting to pass over knowledge over to new officers. An email will be sent out with times and dates in order to coordinate this future meeting.

B. Letter to Town Council regarding incentives

The Energy Committee was asked by the Planning and Zoning Committee how to apply the changes to the Connecticut General Statute that came out in Public Act 21-29. Chairperson Wagner explains that the committee did not see a role for Planning and Zoning to incentivize the solar and renewable energy and energy efficiency.

The Planning and Zoning Committee cannot provide monetary incentives that the Public Act implies because they do not receive any money other than their administrative costs. The Committee creates many requirements and proposing that requirements can be reduced for rooftop solar development would suggest that the requirements should be relaxed for every situation. The statute would also allow the Planning and Zoning Committee to require ground source heat pumps, solar or batteries and at this time building codes are under review. From a financial standpoint, the use of renewable energy credits (RECS) may be required when installing solar energy, however these credits can be limited each year. A developer may not benefit from the RECS credit which may make it difficult to hire a developer who will take on the project.

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ITEM:

5. Business (*Continued*)

The Energy Committee believes that the Town Council would be better suited to provide energy incentives. The Town Council currently provides tax abatements to encourage economic development and a portion of the incentive could come from the adoption of renewable energy or energy efficient technology. Also, the Town Council could incentivize existing commercial, industrial, and multi-family projects to install renewable energy, energy efficiency and electric vehicle charging equipment by providing a tax reduction for a limited time or exempting the equipment from assessments. In order to stimulate local management, the Town Council could provide up to 3% of the total property tax for about 3 years; 1½% if renewable energy is adopted; and 1½% for the installation of a vehicle charging equipment.

Marek Kozikowski supports the Town Council providing abatement for any efforts to change to solar energy. Mr. Kozikowski explains the Energy Committee should reach out to the Town Attorney and Assessor to ensure that abatements can be provided. The Energy Committee agreed that the 3% and 1½% figures should be reviewed further to confirm whether the percentages are too high or low. Chairperson Wagner will review other energy efficiency or renewable energy groups to see how others are reacting towards the new Act. Councilor Kozikowski will review the CT Planner ListServ to determine the best percentage to provide and will reach out to Michael Harris, an Energy Coordinator in Middletown. Councilor Paterna will receive the Town Manager's approval to send the idea to the Town Attorney. Jeffrey Doolittle will reach out to the Assessor regarding tax credits and explained that the State may cover some of the cost as well. Residential solar is not taxable however commercial solar is taxable but can request an exemption. Hank Cullinane explains that geothermal could be rebated through the state and the Committee should be weary of double dipping rebates.

C. Electric Vehicle Sub-Committee (Jim and Jeff)

The Sewer plant is looking into buying an electric vehicle with Water Pollution Control Authority.

D. Renewable Energy and Battery Storage Sub-Committee

Hank Cullinane and Sherman Tarr (not at meeting) will research what is currently available.

E. Outreach Sub-Committee

Athena Loukellis and Marek Kozikowski will create a tri fold pamphlet consisting of who the Energy Committee is and what they offer to be displayed at the Town Hall or Community Center. Existing businesses will receive the help needed to install electric vehicle charges or renewable energy.

ITEM:

5. Business (Continued)

F. Sewer Plant EV

James MacPherson spoke with Tony Manfre in regards to substituting electric vehicles. The advantages are efficiency, maintenance and driving pleasure. Disadvantages are winter climate control and fueling. The department has a compatible usage pattern that will work well with an electric vehicle and have a level of receptivity within the department to it.

Jeffrey Doolittle agrees and are looking for a good candidate for an EV vehicle. Chairperson Wagner recommended installing EV chargers in front of the library or any other busy places in South Windsor. Mr. Doolittle explained the town needs to find an installer to partner with, and have town organizations approve the installation. This should be something that does not require the town to put up a lot of money upfront. Councilor Kozikowski recommends a pilot program.

G. Guest Speaker

Jim Sicord
Senior Energy Advisor
EnergySage
617.936.0390

Commercial solar shoppers lack transparency and choice. Information access is limited for shoppers and installers. EnergySage helps to advise buyers on how to make smarter energy choices by providing a “mock proposal” to allow a better understanding of the investment. Custom solar quotes are provided and support is provided throughout the shopping process to ensure the best solar option at a fair price was chosen. EnergySage also provides access to financing options from multiple providers.

EnergySage will assist South Windsor SMB community’s journey to achieve a realistic energy impact. South Windsor’s clean energy goals can be advanced by SMB solar installations through electrifying schools with solar and virtually net metered solar subscriptions by 2023. Organizations with ESG goals are scaling their facilities and operations having the biggest part to play. EnergySage provides the platform and process to help businesses go solar through access to the solar industry, providing experience and industry recognition, and will assist businesses to take climate-centered actions. EnergySage earns a success fee from providers for projects going to installations. 25% of revenue will be shared with the South Windsor Energy Committee or 25% of revenue will be shared with the business investing in solar as a rebate. The Energy Committee members agreed that the 25% of revenue being shared was a great incentive but are still determining whether the 25% would go towards the Town or with the business that is investing in solar energy.

ITEM:

5. Business (*Continued*)

H. Project updates

a. Timothy Edwards – solar plus battery

Darrell Crowley explains that a letter of intent has been signed recently to pursue the battery project.

b. Pleasant Valley – solar

Darrell Crowley explains that the project is in beginning phase since the building is not built yet. No contracts have been signed yet.

c. Sewer Plant – battery

Chairperson Stephen Wagner explains that a site has been identified near the generator. The site still needs to be cleared and graded but attorneys are currently working on a contract. A letter of intent has been signed.

d. Police Station update – including EVSE

Jeffrey Doolittle explains that details regarding design are being worked on, such as placement of outlets.

e. Eli Terry – solar

Darrell Crowley confirmed that the Eli Terry solar project is up and running at this time. The project is currently at Phase 2.

f. Little League Solar (preliminary discussion)

Chairperson Stephen Wagner explains that the Little League wants to install solar energy on the snack bar. Currently the Little League pays the electric bill even though it is a town facility.

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6) Adjournment

Hank Cullinane made a motion to adjourn. Darrell Crowley seconded the motion. At 6:13 p.m. The Energy Committee meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Dominica Zdonek
Clerk of the Council