

**Climate Action Committee
Net Metering Working Group
Meeting Minutes**

**January 4, 2016, 4:00 p.m
Brookline Town Hall, Room 310**

All Members Present: David Lescohier, Craig Bolon, John Harris, Tom Kilday
Staff: none, *Others Present:* none

David Lescohier called the meeting to order. Craig Bolon volunteered to take notes and prepare minutes.

Discussion and review of Massachusetts solar net metering legislation

Members of the working group discussed bills in the General Court that were considered at the previous meeting on December 29 and other documents, including:

Mark LeBel, et al., Next generation solar policy framework for Massachusetts, Acadia Center, June 2, 2015
<http://acadiacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Next-Generation-Solar-Policy-Framework-for-MA-060215.pdf>

Communication from Haskell Werlin to David Lescohier, dated January 4:

Subject: Edits from Mark LeBel

Date: Mon, 4 Jan 2016 12:36:53 +0000

From: Haskell Werlin <hwerlin@solar design.com>

The Werlin communication sought support for a document called Next Generation Solar Policy Framework, produced by an advocacy group organized by commercial installers, designers and labor unions involved with solar energy projects, most recently dated July 24, 2015. Mr. Werlin's company, Solar Design Associates of Harvard, MA, provides design and engineering services for solar and wind energy systems.

Members of the working group raised questions about engagement with business interests and about a policy proposal produced months before the net metering bills currently pending in the General Court. John Harris said that the advocacy group organized by Mr. LeBel of Arcadia Center, with headquarters in Boston, was in disagreement over responding to competing bills in the General Court and would be holding some kind of meeting during the next several weeks to review its policy proposal.

The Brookline working group was organized for a short-term effort to advise the Climate Action Committee about the status of net metering legislation and the potentials for effective policies. David Lescohier brought to the meeting a new draft of a policy statement. Craig Bolon suggested that net metering policy should be described through major objectives. John Harris and Tom Kilday objected to invoking specific provisions of current legislative bills.

After discussion of the draft, the working group agreed on several changes and voted to recommend to the Climate Action Committee the statement that follows these minutes.

Other business

Next meeting, if any, to be arranged.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Statement as recommended January 4, 2015

Hon. Stanley C. Rosenberg, Senate President
Hon. Robert A. DeLeo, Speaker of the House

[Leaders of Brookline's town government] wish to express our appreciation for the efforts of the Administration and the Legislature to ensure that the Commonwealth continues to lead the nation in energy efficiency and renewable energy. We understand that a balanced, long-term energy plan with a range of energy sources providing safe, efficient and uninterrupted energy delivery is essential if we want to maintain and improve our economic growth and provide a high quality of life for our residents. We appreciate the efforts of you and your colleagues to address our energy issues comprehensively.

Solar generation must be a key part of this picture. In recent years, Massachusetts has become a true leader in solar development, with over 900 megawatts of installed solar capacity statewide. This far exceeds the original solar goal of 250 megawatts by 2017 and is well on the way to the current goal of 1,600 megawatts by 2020. Local effort in cities and towns to host solar developments on residential, commercial and municipal property has been the bedrock of this success. Brookline currently has issued building permits for more than 600 kilowatts of privately owned residential solar. After the May, 2015, Town Meeting voted unanimous approval, the Town is proceeding with construction of a 1.4 megawatt solar plant at the DPW transfer station. This is clear evidence that the policy framework established by the Green Communities Act in 2008 has served us well.

In order to sustain progress toward the goal of 1,600 megawatts by 2020 and continue building on our past achievements, *[leaders of Brookline's town government]* strongly support elimination of the net metering caps for municipal and private projects. Net metering is a critical part of solar development financing. The public and private sector caps of 5 and 4 percent of peak load have already been reached in the National Grid and Unitil service territories, stalling municipal and private projects currently under development and precluding new ones from beginning. Soon the applications for projects in other areas, including Brookline, will hit their cap limits as well.

The value of net metering credits must be kept at a reasonable level. Current policy, in many cases, is to value net metering credits at the full retail rates. Several of the solar bills under consideration would decrease the value of net metering credits for new projects, once the goal of 1,600 megawatts is reached. We appreciate the intentions of these bills to support municipal and privately owned solar projects and sustain solar development. However, we are concerned that some of the proposed changes in the net metering policy could risk future projects.

In addition, the SREC-II incentive program expires once we have reached 1,600 megawatts. We strongly support the creation of a new program that lowers costs for ratepayers and allows us to achieve even greater long-term solar goals and to take full advantage of the federal tax credits that have been extended.

Again, we ask you to support (1) eliminating the caps on net metering, (2) maintaining a fair value for net metering credits, either at retail rates or a proper economic valuation, and (3) creating a new solar incentive program to reach solar goals after 1,600 megawatts. This is the only way that Massachusetts will be able to achieve continued progress and meet our ambitious solar energy goals.