

CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the June 13, 2016 Public Hearing and Meeting

Attendees

Ben Chiang, David Lescohier, Linda Olson-Pehlke, Alan Leviton, Nancy Heller, Deborah Rivers, Don Weitzman, Dan Bennett, Blair Hines, Kathleen, Scanlon

Staff: Maria Morelli

Approval of the Minutes of the May 16, 2016 Hearing

Alan Leviton submitted one correction, regarding 0% additionality under the Community Choice Aggregation section.

VOTED (6 – 0 – 2) A majority of the Committee voted to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2016 hearing with one correction noted.
Ben Chiang, Dan Bennett, and Don Weitzman abstained.

Public Hearing with Blue Wave Capital (Solar Developer)

The purpose of the meeting was to present visuals for the proposed installation of panels on the Runkle School. The Climate Action Committee hosted the meeting on behalf of the School Committee prior to the Selectmen's vote to enter into an agreement with Blue Wave Capital (BWC). Sandra Brown, a Director at BWC, provided an overview of recent and upcoming milestones.

- Through MAPC's procurement process, BWC was selected as the preferred solar developer.
- In addition to the Runkle School, three other municipal buildings (Soule, Main Library, and Kirrane) are slated for solar panels in 2016.
- The Board of Selectmen will need to sign the agreement with BWC.
- BWC will then prepare a system design, construction schedule, and operations and maintenance plan.
- Solar panel installation is planned for the Runkle this summer.

Members of the committee posed the following questions. It was soon clear that the BWC presenter would need to prepare another session to address these questions more fully.

- What are the environmental benefits?
- How would the impending state legislation on net metering affect Brookline's contract with BWC?
- What percentage of energy consumption would be offset by energy generation?
- What is the construction schedule (Runkle is also used in the summer)?

- Who maintains the system?
- Will the Town have an option of purchase the panels?
- What will happens when the system needs to be shut down for maintenance? Will there be penalties?
- How visible are the panels? How much disruptive glare will they generate? What is the angle of the tilt? How many feet/inches above roof?
- What is the capacity of the panels?
- Will mechanicals on roof be a hindrance?
- How long will installation take?
- Could BWC provide a sample of the panel that will be used?
- Provide an analysis of the net metering credit value and at which price it can be sold.
- What are the annual savings?

Rather than vote on a recommendation to the BOS, the committee recommended that the hearing be continued to a hearing before the Board of Selectmen at which BWC would address more comprehensively answers to these fundamental questions and provide an overview of all the sites slated for panels in 2016. The BOS will not sign an agreement without adequate renderings for all four sites.

Next Steps

- Host of public hearing before the Board of Selectmen so that BWC can present visuals for all four sites slated for solar panel installation in 2016(Runkle, Soule, Main Library, and Kirrane).
- On the behalf of the BOS, the Planning Department will mail notices to abutters within 300 feet of each site two weeks in advance.
- Sandra Brown will schedule appropriate financial and engineering BWC staff to attend the hearing.
- Presentation before BOS should be prepared to address questions put forth in CAC hearing about savings, energy consumption, environmental benefits, construction schedule and construction management issues.
- The Building Department will attend the BOS hearing, as BWC will need to coordinate permitting activities with Charlie Simmons.
- The School Committee still needs to host a public hearing to vote on approving the installation on the Runkle.

Nancy Heller emphasized that many of these steps are not required but are recommended to ensure transparency.

Hearing adjourned.

Other Business

David Lescohier informed the committee that the Department of Energy Resources is writing regulations defining net metering incentives. A public hearing is scheduled for June 22 from 1 to 3 pm at the Mass. College of Art.

JOINT MEETING WITH CLIMATE ACTION BROOKLINE (CAB) ON NET ZERO

Nancy Heller recommended narrowing the focus of the discussion to the net zero possibilities for the ninth school.

Committee members offered the following insights:

- Net zero planning must begin now(Alan Leviton).
- Cambridge is requiring net zero standards with its public schools (Deborah Rivers).
- The Town should seriously consider geothermal (Don Weitzman).
- The committee should tour sites in municipalities where standards have been applied (David Lescohier).
- The BOS and the committee should establish an official committee to study implementing net zero standards (David Pantalone). Nancy Heller recommended that the committee work with the CAB on a case study of what can be done.

Building Commissioner Dan Bennett offered the following advice if the focus were to remain on the ninth school: Break down construction costs in order to make a persuasive case to the School Department. In a time of overrides, additional construction costs due to net zero objectives could be a big negative. It is important for the committee to educate parents regarding the benefits.

Several attendees added that the Town should advocate for bike-friendly policies, as the climate action crisis is in large part a transportation issue.

The committee recommended that the CAC and CAB co-chairs meet to address the possibilities for applying net zero standards to the ninth school.

Meeting adjourned.