

Northfield Energy Committee Meeting Minutes  
November 14, 2023. 6:00pm  
Town Hall

Present: Judy Wagner, Co-chair  
Jim VanNatta, Co-chair  
Andrew Vernon  
Spirit Joseph  
Seth Hansell, Secretary

In discussion: Mallory Sullivan - Northfield Grants Developer

1. Approval of minutes:
  - 1.1. Approval of July minutes
  - 1.2. Approval of August minutes as amended.
2. Review of Green Communities Grant Work
  - 2.1. Huge amount of work and thanks to Spirit and Mallory for pulling this together over the last few months
  - 2.2. Things we learned
    - 2.2.1. Getting support from Eversource was both not timely enough for this grant and what they suggested was beyond the scope of what we would be able to get out of this level of grant.
    - 2.2.2. Ben Weil was very helpful in terms of thinking about how we can do what we need to or want to do, but with a critical eye on the cost.
    - 2.2.3. Combining information from various sources really took us to the last minute and we acknowledge that we really need to be more ahead of the game.
    - 2.2.4. Now we feel that we have more of an overarching plan for NES, something we didn't really have prior to this process.
    - 2.2.5. It also seems that Green Communities is expecting more buy-in from the town, particularly for the larger grants, something that the town would need to partially fund.
  - 2.3. How to improve the process
    - 2.3.1. Get more specific on the costs so that we can go after some of the other grants we have been made aware of.

- 2.3.1.1. Can we reach out to Ben Weil and Elliot Drake (with Royal Steam) about this?
      - 2.3.1.2. Loop Scott McKusick back in on this
    - 2.3.2. Get the word about our experiences with Eversource back to DOER (through Chris Mason), particularly since we are not the only ones that have had some of the issues with them.
    - 2.3.3. Potential other follow-up steps:
      - 2.3.3.1. Walk through needs and concerns with Andrea L.
      - 2.3.3.2. Want to go back to Eversource with our feedback and see if they are interested in improving their approach to this level of project.
    - 2.3.4. Having access to the actual grant template sooner would have been helpful.
  - 2.4. Annual Report
    - 2.4.1. We were holding off on submitting all of the required data since we thought that more of it had been automated by FRCOG
    - 2.4.2. Once this data has been fully entered, including data from the school, this report should be submitted before deadlines which have been pushed back.
  - 2.5. Future work
    - 2.5.1. We need to become more versed in the changes to the Green Communities Grants that we are expecting to be coming soon.
      - 2.5.1.1. These include thinking about carbon use as well as simply energy and efficiency
      - 2.5.1.2. Vehicle purchases
3. Solar Planning Project
- 3.1. Recap:
    - 3.1.1. Approached by UMass to see if we wanted to be part of their project
    - 3.1.2. Students in the Energy Extension program collected significant data, which was useful, but were unable to really meet some of the lofty goals they suggested might come out of the work.
  - 3.2. Several communities were involved in this study and a joint meeting may be forthcoming which could help continue to push this project forward or at least wrap up the project.

- 3.3. Financing was one issue we don't think they will be able to help us with, based on the work they have done.
- 3.4. Next Steps:
  - 3.4.1. We still hope to have a round of discussions with other Northfield Committees, and town departments and select board. Further action would emerge from these discussions.
  - 3.4.2. We could still have additional meetings with other interested communities to see what they have done and are doing, and share our work, using the study as a springboard for that conversation.
- 4. Discussion of potential other sources of funding, much of which we may not be able to access, but there should be some. We don't know if or what the options might be in terms of where we can reach, given the size and make-up of Northfield.
- 5. Presentations to Town Committees and Boards
  - 5.1. Finance Committee
    - 5.1.1. We need to explain how much we have managed to generate in savings and have brought in with various grants
    - 5.1.2. Is MEI data useful for showing energy savings? Alison may be able to help with this, but it is not clear how we could best present it.
    - 5.1.3. Need to meet in December or January so that they can think about putting our requests into a warrant for town meeting if we want to be able to go after the larger matching grants that are available.
  - 5.2. Select Board
    - 5.2.1. After this most recent Green Communities application comes through (or not).
    - 5.2.2. This is something that has remained on the back burner for too long.
- 6. New Opportunities
  - 6.1. Discussed notes taken by Gretchan Licata, facilities management at NES, from the Mass Facilities Administrator Association Conference in Worcester regarding funding for energy upgrades
  - 6.2. Discussed a new Climate Leader program
    - 6.2.1. Several requirements that we may not be able to reach
      - 6.2.1.1. Including opting into a new stretch code

- 6.2.2. Smaller steps along the way include a decarbonization plan which is something for which we have submitted an expression of interest.
- 6.2.3. Funds granted may also need a match from the town as a sign of commitment from the town to work towards achieving the Climate Leader designation.

7. Energy Aggregation

- 7.1. We just heard from Colonial Power and Eversource regarding their bids and rates
- 7.2. Colonial Power will be preparing material for us to share and will also be sending out announcements to current customers.
- 7.3. It will also be very easy to opt out. It is less clear about how to opt in for people who are not already enrolled in the program.

Next Meeting Date set for December 12, 2023 (rescheduled for Dec 19)

Minutes Approved Dec 19, 2023