

Northfield Energy Committee Meeting Minutes  
Jan 17, 2023. 6:00pm  
Town Hall

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

- Motion to approve the November Minutes by Andrew, seconded by Judy, unanimously approved.
- Motion to approve the December Minutes by Jim, seconded by Andrew, unanimously approved.
- Welcome to potential new member Spirit Joseph as an active observer

Green Communities Grant

- Alison Gage (FRCOG) was unable to join us in person, so the discussion of the annual reporting process has been tabled until Feb.
  - Want to discuss ways to streamline the quarterly reporting process
    - We typically have to individually enter lots of data by hand, such as gasoline fill-ups split into various departments.
    - New police chief may be open to helping us track the various vehicles, e.g. the savings we are getting from the hybrid compared with the full gas powered cruisers.
  - Alison also sees some discrepancies in-line which Andrew has been seeing.
    - Andrew thinks he can understand each one as an individual and explainable event.
- Concerned about future application process
  - Difficult to find information about 2023 grant cycle.
  - We will see if turning multiple eyes towards this might help.
  - The timeliness of this is likely important and Eversource could drag out things until we have missed another opportunity

Eversource

- We've been updating NES by going at heating and ventilation



- 3 years of work, starting prior to Covid which caused prices to go up, and we had to drop some of our expectations and renovations were limited to only a portion of the school. The hope was to complete the work with future grants.
- Contacted Eversource at the suggestion of Mark Rubinsky and Eversource assigned people last Feb to help us.
  - They sent out several different people and eventually came back asking of a financial commitment which we are not empowered to do
- There could be a 70/30 split on engineering costs where the town would only need to cover 30% of the engineering necessary and Eversource would cover the remaining portion. But it is not clear if even this level of study would be enough to help secure a grant if it does not include cost/benefits.
- Future Suggested Steps:
  - Review what we had before and talk to Scott McKusick who might be able to give guidance about selecting between installing unlinked mini-splits in the rooms at NES that have had the new air circulation systems installed or starting work on the remaining rooms at NES that have not yet been renovated.
    - Note: PVRs Superintendent is in the midst of a full facilities audit of the district and may be considering energy issues, but we are not confident energy considerations are being discussed.
  - Can we just ask a contractor for an estimate to simply put in non-linked mini-splits into the rooms at NES?
    - Would need to be someone on the official list of people that can go to bid and are certified to do this work.
    - MJ Moran was brought up as a potential contractor
    - BG Mechanical services might also be a possible bidder

#### Solar Assessment Through UMass CEE

- We believe this is a program aimed at a municipal target.
  - But there seemed to be a large number of questions that were aimed more at residential and private interests.
- Are simply a sounding board for UMass to test out their program by thinking about how easy or challenging it might be to adopt and/or use their materials and plans.



- When the class is over, in May, this project will be completed by staff and we should have more useful information.
- Information we did not get tonight was, we think, supposed to be a list of sites in Northfield that would be suitable for Solar without any sense of who owns the land or who might be interested in actually installing solar.
  - In terms of existing power structures
  - In terms of open land
- Possibly UMass CEE will give us ideas about where to find the funding for solar improvements.
- Since we don't have these results at this point, what questions will we have?
  - Will it come with specific recommendations for future action steps?
    - We don't think so, but are not sure.
- All of this will require much more discussion from the planning commission in terms of town priorities and the fact that there really are no guidelines.
  - Is Northfield really able to do the level of planning that this project seems to require?

To Do:

- Get back of the envelope estimate from Scott on what a 30/70 split for an engineering project might actually cost so we could go to the town with information.
- Report to Andrea on
  - the Eversource roadblocks
  - the progress with UMass CEE program
  - getting funding for the engineering project at NES
- Update to selectboard
  - Green Communities report summary.
  - What current work we are doing and our current struggles.
  - That we might be coming with a request for future funding.

Next Meeting set for Feb 7th, 6:00 pm

Approved:

x  date: 2/8/23

x \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_