

Bennington Energy Committee
December 7, 2016
Minutes

Attendance: Molly Eppig, Peter Eppig, David McKenzie, Cathy Joly (Temple Energy Committee)

Minutes: The minutes of the November 9 meeting were approved as written.

LED Streetlight Replacement: The committee recognizes that the Select Board may wish to keep some of our present streetlights that were not included in the map that we presented to them showing lights that meet the criteria that were outlined at the last Energy Committee meeting. We determined that we would give the Select Board the map showing all the present lights and the map showing just the seventeen that met the criteria and ask the Board to add to the latter map any lights that they feel should be kept.

Solar Energy: The Select Board has expressed an interest in having the Energy Committee look into solar energy for the town. We discussed several towns that have solar energy installations, including Peterborough, Durham, Rutland, Vermont, and Antrim (in planning stage). Durham currently has 100 kW of solar power on the town library, police station, and the Churchill Rink. Peter Martel and Cathy Joly are attempting to set up a round table where local energy committees can share their experience with energy projects, including solar energy.

There are options available by which the town could have a privately built solar array paid for by purchasing electricity from the contractor until the construction cost is paid off, at which time the array would become town property. One advantage of this method is that the electricity rate would remain fixed and would not increase as rates from conventional power suppliers would be expected to do. Another scheme combines solar arrays with batteries to assure that installations that must stay on, such as the pumping station, would have power available in an emergency. Such a system could, through agreement, allow the power company to tap the solar or battery power at times of extra heavy use, such as very hot summer days. This could alleviate the high cost of must-have power by relaxing the requirement for the power company to keep back-up power constantly on line.

Action Items:

Prepare copies of the two town streetlight maps presented to the select board – the overlay showing all of the present lights and the map showing those the committee advocated keeping (Molly).

Arrange to meet with the select board to provide them with the two maps and ask them to add to the committee map those lights that they feel should be kept (David).

Contact Antrim to find out what they are doing about solar energy (Peter Eppig).

Recorded by David McKenzie