

**MINUTES**

**ENERGY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2010**

**5:30 P.M.**

**GREAT BARRINGTON TOWN HALL**

**334 MAIN STREET, GREAT BARRINGTON, MA 01230**

Committee Members Present: Chris Vlcek, Nancy Lee Rogers, Beth Moser, Alana Chernila, Jenn Bailey, Diego Gutierrez, Nick Stanton, Brandee Nelson

Also Present: Nancy Nysten, CET, and Lauren Gaherty, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

- I. Call to Order. – by Chair at 5:30 pm.
- II. Review and Approve Minutes of Last Meeting – Minutes distributed and reviewed. No comments. Beth moved to accept. Alana seconded. Committee voted 7-0 to accept minutes.
- III. Status of Ethics Training – Diego and Brandee turned forms into Jenn. All others complete.
- IV. Grogan’s Carbon Footprint Presentation – no representatives attended the meeting.
- V. BRPC/CET Green Communities Presentation – Introductions by Lauren Gaherty from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and Nancy Nysten from CET who are working with committees in Berkshire County for Green Communities (GC) designation. Recommends reviewing GC criteria – 5 total. Working with task force of town staff to see how Great Barrington (GB) can meet criteria, strategize on approach and schedule. Provided copies of the Green Community Action Plan, Town of Great Barrington, November 2010 – a blueprint for GC designation. They can also help with implementation. They advised us that Town will need to take action at the 2011 Town Meeting. Once we meet the 5 criteria, then we apply for status at the State level. We can then be eligible for grant funds for residential and municipal energy project or facilitate renewable energy. Lauren leaving copies for records to comply with Open Meetings Law (OML). Appendices are guidance to help town. Zoning is a criteria(Criteria #1) – Great Barrington meets the by-right for renewable energy. Facility type allowed include be

research and development (R&D) or manufacturing. Generating is also an option of the criteria, but is not in GB's current zoning. Committee members inquire to size of a generating facility. BRPC says a 250kw facility would take 2-4 acres; Silver Lake is 1.8MW, for example. Committee could think about generation because community gets "bonus points" but this would require a zoning change that would go through Town Meeting process. Great Barrington also has criteria #2 covered – expedited permitting.

Town will need to do criteria #3 – energy reduction plan. Inventory Town energy use, street lights, fleet, etc. and establish baseline and then develop reduction plan to reduce 20% in 5 yrs from baseline. Town is working on developing baseline – Jenn working on. Reduction plan also needs to be completed. Jenn is using MassEnergy Insight – oil, diesel and 87 octane has to be added manually other utilities are automatically logged by the utility companies. Once data is entered, an analysis is fairly easily completed. Data can be entered calendar year or fiscal year. Town to probably look at fiscal year beginning July 08-June 09 (fiscal year 09). Jenn is 80% done. Once data base is created, committee will work on reduction plan. Audit status – Berkshire Gas reviewing oil to gas conversion. Lighting has been reviewed. Committee has copy of the audit.

When does 5 yr start? Fiscal 09 is likely start which means we are in the 5 yr period currently. The lighting improvements made can be credited toward reduction. Reduction is based on gross energy use – notes vehicles are difficult. Switch to natural gas would be a big help for three buildings currently heated by oil.

Three cars – Fire Chief's truck, DPW chief, animal control officer. Once vehicle is retired an energy efficient vehicle should be looked at. This is part of vehicle policy. This is separate from energy usage which is measured in total MMBTU.

Plan needs to be comprehensive to reduce heating load and use more energy efficient equipment when its useful life is up.

BRPC suggests to aggressively pursue audits. We've only had National Grid and prism audits.

Funds for an engineered audit are available through Green Community grants. For now use best info available, best published data available. Need recommendations, estimated savings, estimated costs. We can use standard energy use per square foot and compare our use to set goals. We need to evaluate where funds can be best spent for best energy savings.

Department of Energy Resources (DOER) administers grants. BRPC is providing technical assistance to Towns.

For energy reduction plan Jenn and Joe (Sokul) are the primary developers. Data ready by year's end. Kevin wants to include Great Barrington Energy Committee in plan development. Generate ideas. Follow guidance document on putting the plan together. Website has model plans. DOER will provide consult on plan. Operation and Maintenance (O&M) category has lots of potential – 2-5% reduction available.

Other criteria is #5 Stretch Code. We would need to pass it at Annual Town Meeting in May. Committee to do public outreach. BRPC planning on doing a South County info workshop in spring which would be geared to builders/inspectors and would have extensive Q&A. Committee inquired if we need to then have formal public hearing outside of Town Meeting? Jenn/BRPC indicated we need to look bylaw requirements because it is Town specific.

Committee discussed how much info we can get out and by what means? What info is most important to get out? Committee has no budget therefore means of outreach are limited to low cost options. CET suggests funds can be found a New England Grassroots Network and Berkshire-Taconic Community Fund. Timing on grant may be issue for short term. Energy Committee webpage, PSAs, community events are probably best no/low cost options for now.

Other ideas: Need to create a calendar to work backwards from Town Meeting and put schedule together. Speak at clubs, etc. Put a presentation together talking about what 2 things are happening in Great Barrington – efficiency/savings and stretch code (better buildings). Need uniform talking points. Record wants to do a weekly Green column. Be cross generational. Emphasize fiscal benefits. Discuss other communities that are already doing it. In Berkshire County : Lenox, Pittsfield, Williamstown, North Adams, Becket have stretch code passage; Pittsfield was first Green Community in state. CET can provide us with some other materials they have; e.g. Town of Florida. Will go to Jenn and she will share with the committee.

Towns that have not passed? Lee tried one vote. Discuss with them? Ed may have been in touch with Gordon Bailey in Lee.

How many new building permits? Cost per new building as of July 1, 2010. Stretch Code is only 15% more efficient than existing building code. Upfront cost is down to \$2-3,000 per building.

We still need to meet with the Lenox energy contact – a new person. BRPC has name. Energy Committees in Egremont, Stockbridge, Alford, Lenox can also be resources.

To get Green Community designation, we need to apply. Applications are accepted 2 times per year. Our general schedule should be Winter/spring to work on energy reduction plan. DOER will probably review partial application – email Jim Berry on particulars.

Cost savings for new const versus renovation. New construction has a positive cash flow.

Meeting in February/March? Do some preliminary work to get word out earlier. Keep message simple.

- VI. Report on 10/28 Energy Performance Contracting - Is it applicable to this community? Energy Performance Contracting - a state program designed to pay for capital energy improvements through guaranteed energy savings from existing operational budgets. e.g. 20 improvements with \$500,000 cost. Energy company comes in and does detailed audit to verify 20 improvements and will price out and pay through cost savings. E.g. \$20,000/yr savings – contractor is paid out of this. If projections aren't met no loss to Town, if projections are exceeded Town keeps savings. Contractors (ESCo) do audits, procurement, train in O&M, and partner in monitoring savings. Contracts are 7-12 yrs duration.

BRPC is trying to get an owners agent to represent Town's interest but needs to get someone hired by December. And also to aggregate building stock in multiple communities. Franklin County has done. BRPC is trying to assess interest to see if there is enough building projects. Hasn't gotten a lot of response so far.

Companies that do this are primarily national.

- VII. Wind Consortium Presentation – Rep. Pignatelli participated in wind consortium, he is opposed to by right siting of wind because of loss of local control. Tom Wickham suggested possibly create a wind consortium that acts as a development company to control siting issue. Legislation pending to expedite wind permitting – preempts local control which is why Great Barrington has not supported to-date. Generators will expedite permitting and pick best sites.

Article on 9 Towns in Rhode Island who did something similar at <http://www.pbn.com/RI-EDC-awards-East-Bay-Energy-Consortium-almost-466K-in-grant-loan,52726>

Build for profitability and acceptable location. The towns would keep profits public & local by producing our own energy

Massachusetts Municipal Association is tracking. Kevin will keep us informed. Will probably hear more soon.

- VIII. Discussion – Stretch Code Passage Schedule – Meetings coming up, tasks to be taken up. Outreach – talking points, brochures, Beth willing to talk and write. Critical constituencies are builders, realtors. Can use Town’s existing list. Some fliers can be done through Manager’s Office. Meetings (formal/informal), press, public buzz (presentation). Get Becket and Lenox materials. Set up committee meeting and invite contractors in and get dialogue. What is language of stretch code? Chris may reach out to Ed May.
- IX. Discussion – Facilities Review (Table to future meeting)
- X. Next Meeting Date- Possible Agenda Items. Working meeting on strategy and message. 5:30 pm Tuesday 11/30/10 at Town Hall.
- XI. Adjournment. Motion to adjourn by Diego seconded by Nancy. Committee voted 7-0 to adjourn. Meeting ended at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Brandee Nelson

\* For full document, see Town Clerk's records \*

# Green Community Action Plan



**Town of Great Barrington  
November 2010**