

Citizens' Energy Challenge Committee
Minutes of August 16, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 4:34 pm

Present: Members Nicholas Solitro, Pierre Duval, Richard Galipeau, and Denise Stetson; Juliana Berry, Town Planner.

A motion was made by D. Stetson, seconded by R. Galipeau, to approve the minutes of July 18, 2018. All Ayes.

J. Berry gave a recap of the July presentation given by Malinda Howard and Karen Stewart from Smart Power on the WeeGreen initiative. Part of the new program replaces the state Solarize program, but still includes the basic concept where a contract is made with a solar installer to provide a set price to homes and businesses. WeeGreen also has a web-based marketplace component for which the Town, as a cooperating organization, would get 20% of the purchase price of energy efficient products. This money could be used for any purpose the Town chooses. A portion of each solar installation through the program is earmarked towards a Town project too.

An Ashaway (Hopkinton) resident is interested. If Richmond participates, we will have to decide how and if to include other towns.

The marketplace was discussed with regard to vendors on the website. For example: It may be a difficult to get people to shop online for items they can get at the local hardware store. It may be just as expedient to use the vendors already existing on the WeeGreen website. How to get people to buy from this site was discussed; this would be part of the committee's role to distribute flyers or otherwise get out the information.

It was generally agreed that the opportunity for residential solar was the more important component. The committee discussed how to promote the program: the Saturday morning Community Marketplace at Town Hall, recreation activities, and going to school open houses were events that could be targeted. With just four members on this committee, volunteers will be needed. The Conservation Commission is an example of a local Board that could be approached to help, but additional volunteers will have to be recruited. With summer ending, there are fewer opportunities for getting out to public venues.

Logistics was the next topic. If we are going to ask people to sign up to have a company install solar panels they would want to know who that is. We also need to know the time period the contract will cover for signing up. J. Berry said that the Smart Power staff will help with a Request for Proposals (RFP). She will contact them to do that, and to get general material that can be distributed at school open houses and perhaps the state primary elections and definitely the general election (if allowed).

The consensus was to go ahead with the RFP and meet before the primary. Our next meeting is rescheduled from September 19 to September 5 to see where we stand with the RFP and materials. Richmond resident Peter Stetson attended as a member of the public and participated in the discussion.

On a motion by Solitro, the meeting adjourned at 5:06 pm.

Attested by Denise L. Stetson, Secretary