

Mason Energy Commission January 9, 2023

Attending: Kathy Chapman, Curt Spacht, Dick Stockdale, Michele Siegmann, Joseph Harney, Garth Fletcher, Darrell Scott, Michelle Scott

Approve the November Minutes: Dick moved to approve minutes, and Michelle seconded the motion, the members voted in the affirmative.

Town Report discussion: Each member has a part of the town report to write, and this week all will turn in their parts. Kathy asked for pictures for the Town Report.

Chief Burns, MVFD (Tony): Tony has proposed to the BOS to install solar panels to defray the cost of electricity at the Fire Department (MVFD). The BOS was concerned that the "return on investment" on solar panels was too long, based on the current electricity consumption at the MVFD. The MEC members recounted to Tony that they considered doing what the town of Shelburne, NH, population around 345 (in 2018) were able to do: install solar panels for their town building(s) by taking out a private loan and paying the loan back based on the savings in electricity. That remains an option for Mason. Another option is to contract with a private vendor to install the solar panels and then pay that company what we would normally pay Eversource for the same amount of usage. Another option is to help private companies make solar power available to the town by applying for and receiving a Rural Energy Development Assistance grant. This is a very round-about way to getting town goals accomplished, but something to consider if all else fails. This program addresses energy audits as well. There are other possible ways to get energy audits, and ways to avoid spending an exorbitant amount of money on them. The MEC agrees with Tony that installing solar panels is a step towards moving the town to a fully electric future. This is a worldwide trend.

REAP grants: House by the Side of Road got a REAP grant and put solar panels on their main building and their convenience store next door. They were very pleased with the simplicity of the process, though the application is quite tedious. Pickity Place is already in progress to make some changes and is very interested in applying for REAP grants. And Parkers Maple Barn is planning some reconstruction of their sugar house, and is very interested in finding out more. Michelle is contacting Parkers and JoyBerry Farm also. Kathy created a cover letter with links to Ken Yearman, REAP, and weatherization. Kathy and Michelle sent REAP info to Pickity Place, Parkers, and JoyBerry Farm.

Website update: Curt is doing some culling and archiving on the website, particularly with the overabundance of EV information.

Energy use monitoring: Garth's graphs of energy use in the highway barn are posted on the Mason Energy website. Garth suggests we need 2 more monitors, one in the highway department and the other at the MVFD. There are monitors at the electric service entrance, but a better breakdown of what devices are using the most electricity is needed. One of the problems is that the box is not labeled to tell which breakers are connected to which devices. A motion was made by Kathy to seek a quote for installing 2 monitors in the highway dept and the highway barn. Michelle Scott seconded it and members voted in the affirmative.

Strategy group: Kathy suggested giving people who we've identified as possible planners be given specific areas to look into before coming together to make any suggestions. Our various subgroups could choose a person that they would work with.

Dick made a motion to adjourn, and Kathy seconded it. All voted in the affirmative. Next meeting is Feb. 6, 2023.