

**Location and time:** Online meeting, 9/17/20 at 7:30 pm

**Members in attendance:** Stephen Harte (Chair), Julie Gervais (Vice Chair), Claire Galkowski, Kate La Croix (Secretary), Juliana Belding, Sue McGown

**Others in attendance:** Tom Philbin (Town Energy Manager), Nancy Hyde (Select Board Member and WEAC liaison), residents of the town tuning in to listen and ask questions via the Zoom chat feature

### **Routine Business**

Approval of minutes. Minutes from the August 2020 meeting were approved.

### **Topics Discussed:**

**Slideshow and presentation by Tom Philbin on the proposed Shuttleworth Solar Array, followed by question and answer session with questions put forward by some Westwood residents:**

1. Please note that the slideshow is available on the town website. Some major points highlighted by Tom during the presentation included:
  - a. Solar projects in Westwood are now into phase 2, which involves capitalizing on the incentives provided through the SMART program in MA. Town-specific solar proposals have included Thurston Middle School, the Council on Aging, Shuttleworth Field, and the Police Station.
  - b. Details and potential benefits of the Shuttleworth project were reviewed, including but not limited to:
    - i. Zero upfront cost to the town.
    - ii. Huge carbon offsets that would, among other things, allow the new school building to be net zero with respect to its energy usage.
    - iii. An extremely significant advance toward the town's stated goal of reaching 90% alternative/green energy usage.
    - iv. The size of the project: 12 acres in total, with construction happening between spring and December of 2021.
  - c. Discussion of reasons for preferring the Shuttleworth location over other, smaller sites in town, including but not limited to:
    - i. Clean energy output would be considerably larger than any other proposed location in town; for example, Shuttleworth's output would be 2x greater than a canopy array at the high school parking lot, and 10x greater than an array on the roof of the new school.
    - ii. Many roofs in town are not designed well for solar; machinery, etc. creates penetrations that block the panels, which would in turn negatively affect the overall efficiency of the array.
    - iii. Solar panels on the new school, for example, would have to be installed at cost; in that case, it would be cheaper to purchase the clean power from

- elsewhere. The structures necessary to make the building able to support the panels would also considerably increase the cost of construction.
- iv. Economic incentives from the state are greater for ground mount arrays than for roof or canopy arrays.
  - v. The trees at Shuttleworth are not old growth forest, and the carbon offsets over time from the solar array would be far greater than what the trees would have absorbed (the numbers on carbon offsets are conservative in the proposal; they will very likely be much better in reality).
  - vi. There is good potential for new plantings and habitat restoration under and around the panels.
- d. Public concerns were raised, including but not limited to:
- i. Cutting down trees seems counterintuitive to environmentally-centered thinking.
  - ii. The loss of trees may lead to increased noise pollution.
  - iii. The loss of green space, particularly on the Islington side of town, would be detrimental to the quality of life of the residents.
  - iv. Animal habitats would be at risk.
  - v. There was a feeling expressed by some residents that other options for solar installations in town haven't been sufficiently explored.
  - vi. There was a feeling expressed by some that Westwood residents have not been adequately informed about this project or given a voice in the discussion.

**Next steps:**

1. With regard to the Shuttleworth proposal FAQs that WEAC had started to compile, we decided to go forward with edits/revisions. Tom and Claire will connect to check the numbers, and then Kate will make final revisions and send to Nancy Hyde when ready.

**Sustainability initiatives for WW:** We looked at the draft of the resiliency and sustainability section of the Comprehensive Plan for Westwood.

1. It was noted that some edits to the plan had been suggested but not yet adopted. (Claire will follow up on this.)
2. Questions were posed: once we have a town Sustainability Action Plan, what do we do with it? When and how do we get started?
3. There was a question re: the annual town CO2 inventory. Tom Philbin spoke about inconsistent data collection from meters in town over the years.
4. Steve Olanoff spoke about slow progress on the plan and noted that changes to the draft are needed. The question was raised: should WEAC be involved in the re-drafting?

**Next steps:** WEAC needs to discuss this topic and WEAC's role in the process further.

**Miscellaneous items:**

1. Confirmed WW Recycling Day for 10/17

**Items for next agenda:**

1. Update on CEA

**Adjourned:** 9:00 PM

**Next meeting date:** 10/15 7:00 PM