

## WEAC MEETING MINUTES- JULY 2021

**Thursday, 7/15/21 @ 7:30 PM**

**Members in attendance:** Julie Gervais, Steve Harte, Claire Galkowski, Kate La Croix, Brian Bayer, Maria Costantini, Sue McGown, Juliana Belding, Jen Atkins

**Others in attendance:** Abby McCabe, Robert Gotti, Ellen Rollings, Steve Olanoff

**Routine business:** June minutes amended and approved.

**Topics discussed w/next steps:**

**Discussion of Ground-mount Solar and Solar Bylaws:**

- 1) Abby McCabe:
  - a. Reviewed current procedure for approval of building mounted solar
  - b. Any installations that are not in plane with the roof of a main building currently require special permit from the Zoning Board; 4 proposals in recent past have been denied 🙅🏻‍♂️ 🙅🏻‍♀️ ❖ ❖ evident there is a need to revise the zoning bylaws.
  - c. Abby will work with the Planning Board to have new bylaws ready for vote at spring town meeting.
  - d. Revision: any ground mount installation would require an application with the Planning Board vs. the Zoning Board. The ZB has had discretionary power in these cases until now. By contrast, the PB could not deny proposals as long as they follow zoning laws. Ground mounts would also be subject to an Environmental Impact Design Review, conducted by the Planner in a short time.
  - e. Still a public process that would allow discussion of concerns from abutters, etc. but would also consider the perspective of the party proposing the ground-mount array.
  - f. Proposed set-backs would be the same as for any other structure
  - g. Some language concerning residential vs. commercial use and the option for the town to remove commercial equipment if it should be abandoned (e.g., a bond for commercial installations but not required for principal use on residential property).
- 2) Input from the group:
  - a. Suggestion that the hurdles are still too high for residents wanting to invest in green energy; other building requests on private property do not require a special permit.
  - b. Concerns voiced regarding whether a process with no public input would pass muster with Fin Comm and the town vote.
  - c. Need to be consistent with requirements for other residential building projects (so exterior extensions would need a site plan).
  - d. Noted Right to Solar law and the public process: concern that solar projects not be subjected to more limitations based on public input than other exterior projects (e.g., pool or shed installations). There is interest in tying this bylaw change to the Comprehensive Plan.
  - e. Need to distinguish between residential and commercial installations in terms of regulations.

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- f. Comments made that the public process is important to ensure that people have made an effort to communicate with their neighbors.

### **Next Steps:**

- 1) Abby will take this to the Planning Board at next meeting (Tuesday, 8/17/21).

### **Discussion of Producer Responsibility:**

- 1) Claire:
  - a) Description of a movement to shift the cost of packaging and printed paper recycling from our taxpayers to the producers, the ultimate goal being to reduce the environmental impacts of packaging production.
  - b) Incentivizes producers to reduce packaging/eliminate unnecessary packaging, use less impactful, more recyclable packaging with more recycled content.
  - c) Would represent significant savings for the town, which could then be funneled back into reduced taxes, increased services, etc.
  - d) A bill has been drafted for MA, H878, as in several other states; ultimate goal is to have a national bill.
  - e) Would like municipal support. Will WEAC bring this to the Select Board and ask it to sign the petition supporting the bill for MA?
  - f) **WEAC voted to approve this action.**

### **Next steps:**

- 1) CG will seek and share a matrix for comparing the bills in various states.
- 2) CG will look for and share evidence of the effects of similar systems.

### **Discussion of Westwood Day Planning:**

- 1) Need to gather names of vendors from Rec Dept.
- 2) Need to contact vendors and ask them about their willingness to use compostables, if provided.
- 3) Need to contact Black Earth Composting re: their compostable materials providers and how we could connect them to the WW Day vendors.
- 4) Need to apply for WEAC booth in vendor village.

### **Next steps:**

- 1) KL and SM will follow up with Rec Dept., vendors, and BEC as necessary.
- 2) KL will apply for vendor village booth.

### **Westwood Community Choice Electricity Update:**

- 1) Should we send our drafted letter to the DPU to try to get an explanation of the approval delay and speed up the process?
- 2) Some concern that it won't make a difference; we are already in the pipeline.
- 3) Group agreement was that the best course of action is to wait and be ready to go once approval comes through.

### **Next steps:**

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- 1) None at this time.

**Adjourned:** 9:30 pm

**Next meeting date:** August 12, 2021 at 8:00 PM