

Energy Action Committee
Zoom Meeting, 03/20/2020, 16:05

Present: Scott Cyr (SC), Paul Heanue (PH), Ben Kerman (BK), Brad Moyer (BM), and Michael Reive (MR)

Absent: Mike Kacherovich (MK) and Beth Porter (BP)

As this was the Committee's first telephonic meeting in line with the Governor's temporary exemption under the Open Meeting Law due to the COVID-19 pandemic, BM began with a roll call and discussion of the ground rules for the conduct of the meeting.

Discussion then moved to a review of the status of the warrant article submitted by the Committee for the creation of a climate action plan committee. MR reviewed his presenting the warrant article before the Selectmen's meeting where the warrant article was considered. MR noted that, while the Selectmen unanimously recommended not to support the warrant article, they were in fact very much in favor of a climate action planning effort, expressing the view that the article was not yet ripe for Town Meeting and that more work, both towards development of a plan and in socializing it within the Town, was warranted. The Selectmen were of the view that such an effort was better conducted at this time through the Town Administrator. BM indicated that the Advisory Committee expressed the same at its meeting reviewing the article. The Advisory Committee voted unanimously to take no action on the warrant article in the belief that the Selectmen, Town Administration, and the Energy Action Committee could work on an alternative approach through Town Administration that could be more expeditious in getting planning underway. BK indicated that, while he was disappointed ultimately that the warrant article did not get support with the Selectmen or the Advisory Committee, he was feeling hopeful that a task-force alternative could be successful.

The Committee having completed its discussion of the warrant article, BM invited any participants from the community to address the matter. One participant asked for greater clarification on the advantages of the warrant article approach versus Town Administration's proposed task force. BM answered the question, walking through the distinctions among the two. Then, having heard no further discussion, BM made the following motion:

MOTION: That the Energy Action Committee vote to withdrawal warrant article KK for consideration at Town Meeting in April 2020.

MR seconded. The Committee voted unanimously to withdraw the warrant article.

Next, BM introduced the topic of solar adoption in Hingham, and invited MR to speak on this agenda topic. MR discussed the possibility of increasing solar adoption in Town. He asked PH what the current solar adoption rate was. PH indicated that there were 75 solar customers in Hingham, and that the current solar output was approximately 2,000 kW (2 MW). MR asked further about the canopies at the Hingham commuter rail station, as well as the possible solar array at the landfill. PH indicated that he only hears about the canopies from the MBTA when he reaches out to them, and he last did so two or three weeks ago. As of yet, they are still not

operational. For the landfill, the selected vendor filed permit paperwork with the MA DEP about a month or a month and a half ago. Furthermore, HMLP is currently in the process of negotiating a purchase power agreement with the vendor. Once the agreement is signed, it will be made public.

BK then asked what the current incentives HMLP offers for residential solar. PH outlined those incentives and directed interested parties to the HMLP website.

MR asked about putting up our own solar arrays on in various Town parking lots. PH indicated that HMLP doesn't own the land, and so can't do it on its own. From PH's view, if the Town wanted to put canopies up, HMLP would enter into a PPA and purchase the power from the Town. MR asked where the financing would come from. BM also asked if HMLP could lease the land from the Town and pay for the canopy installation, and whether that would be economical. PH responded that what made previous solar installations economical was the SREC regime. But that regime has gone away, and the remaining incentive programs are not available to municipal light plants.

With no further items for discussion, BM indicated that the next meeting would be determined at a later date to give an opportunity to understand more how the task force will be set up. Meeting adjourned at 16:56.