



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

MINUTES OF MEETING GREEN ASHLAND AD-HOC COMMITTEE MEETING OF MARCH 29, 2012

Location: Town Hall Lower Level Meeting Room

Present:

Carl Hakansson (Chair)

Matthew Marshquist (Recording Clerk)

Alan Weene (Vice-Chair)

Brett Walker

Kevin Johnson (ex-officio member) present for part of duration

Mark Purple –present for part of duration

Citizens present:

Steven Hickey

Carl called the meeting to order at 7:10pm.

Alan motioned to approve the minutes from the meeting on 3-01-012. Carl seconded the motion, the minutes were approved.

Citizens participation.

Local builder Steven Hickey was in attendance. The committee took advantage of the opportunity to ask him for more feedback on the stretch code. Steven was in attendance at the presentation for builders on the stretch code and the presentation by the green committee to the Selectmen on the warrant article. At the BOS meeting, Steven stated that the person presenting on the stretch code said he thinks the new code goes too far. Carl asked for more details on this. It was noted that the two members of our committee who were in attendance at the builders forum and did not recall hearing a statement to that effect.

Steven said that there were no specific concerns, rather the concern was about the unknown. The stretch code stays ahead of the state building code by one step, as the state building code is updated, the stretch code also changes. If we adopt the code, we do not know what the future changes will be which we will have to keep up with.

Later Carl asked what influenced Steve's decision to build to the code now, has he seen a

benefit? Steve said that no one is walking in and asking to build a super-efficient house.

Matt suggested that if consumers are educated about the benefits of efficient homes, there will be an increase in demand for them. His personal experience when home shopping was frustration with the lack of green homes on the market.

The final point made by Steve was that the HERS rating which new homes must complete has weaknesses, including the fact that smaller homes tend to perform more poorly than larger homes and a lack of transparency in the past about how the standards are decided.

Brett discussed concern about language in code that requires us to conform to all amendments in future, noting that there is some consolation in that we can reject the stretch code later. Steve said that it is not often that laws are taken off the books. Carl noted that wetlands laws have been repealed by many towns.

Stretch Code:

We discussed the Town meeting warrant item on the stretch code. We are consulting with Lisa Mead on the language, she has helped with drafting other warrant items. The Selectmen had not had a chance to read it before last weeks meeting.

If adopted it will be as of July 1st, 2013. We will adopt the current stretch code as is on January 1st until the new one is adopted. As noted previously, the town will follow the state stretch code, as it is amended, so any changes to the state stretch code will need to be followed by the town.

We may consider having a hearing with the planning board as a courtesy.

Brett offered to write up 800 words for the TAB or Metrowest. Liberty Directions he will send to Carl for review. He will cover 5 criteria, the fact that other communities are also doing this, possibly a concrete example of savings.

The committee agreed we do not need another public forum, the key points are covered in WACA show and the articles we are publishing.

The committee reviewed where we are with progress on the other criteria for Green Committee status. The updated zoning bylaws, the vehicle purchasing policy, the baseline and the energy reduction plan. The vehicle purchasing policy should be finalized at the next Board of Selectmen meeting.

The committee discussed the energy audit for the town. We had met with Guardian Energy Management at the previous meeting, to discuss their proposal to help the town with energy audits and drafting our energy reduction plan. At the same time, the town has been in the process of negotiating an agreement with a company called Ameresco to perform the audits. It was Mark Purple's feeling that we should use Ameresco exclusively, rather than trying to have some work done by Ameresco and some by Gaurdian, it could get a bit confusing with

both working on similar things.

The timeline for the Ameresco audit is unclear, but we may be able to use the information. Ameresco is much broader in scope, they will be doing life cycle assessments of such things as roofing materials.

We do not necessarily need to wait for Ameresco, Kevin knows much of what we've been doing already. Using the baseline, we could brainstorm these things.

Mark Purple dropped in for a few moments and updated the committee on the energy audit progress. Town counsel has looked at the contract for investment grade audits. By the end of next two weeks Mark should have more information. Mark may have a document on the scope of the project that he can send around, digitally.

The second part of third criteria will be the energy reduction plan. Ameresco will generate some ideas. Until then, the committee may be able to focus on areas such as culture change, vampire power in power strips and education. The town of Sharon did competition in school system and gave bonuses out to building that saved the most.

Brett suggested the town manager appoint one person per building to be energy efficiency lead. Brett has more ideas that he is eager to share, but will wait until we have seen the initial report from Ameresco.

Motion to adjourn from Brett, which was seconded and passed.