



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

MINUTES OF MEETING GREEN ASHLAND AD-HOC COMMITTEE MEETING OF MAY 7, 2012

Location: Town Hall Lower Level Meeting Room

Present:

Carl Hakansson (Chair)
Matthew Marshquist (Recording Clerk)
Marcia Reni
Kevin Johnson (ex-officio member)
Preston Crow (ex-officio member)

Steven Mitchell
Steven Weisman – Peregrine Energy Group

Carl called meeting to order at 7:08pm

The meeting past few meeting minutes have not been posted for review, the recording clerk will attempt to correct that before the next meeting.

Carl, Matt and Steven Weisman met briefly last week to review the baseline. Steven is on the team from Peregrine Energy Group which is supervising the Ameresco energy audit being conducted by the town. They will provide guidance to the committee on the energy baseline and reduction plan. Matt has been making updates and corrections to the baseline info for the town in Mass Energy Insight based on Steven's feedback. There are further clarifications and corrections to the data which need to be made in the next few days.

Steven reviewed his report with the committee. It includes 4 tables. 2 are in the current draft of the Energy Reduction Plan, one is attached, the fourth details what the town plans to do to reduce energy consumption, including energy savings and costs for each item.

At the current time, the combined energy use for the town is at the level of 54 kBtu/SF Which is very efficient. We can show an 8.7% savings based on the current info. (Note additional changes have been made since this meeting, including a change to the dates covered in the baseline from calendar year to fiscal year 2011. This puts the town closer to 14%) At our current levels, if we were able to reduce by 20%, it would put at 40 kBtu/SF, which is fantastic. For reference, Great Barrington had numbers in the 70s for their baseline year.

We are in great shape already, due to the excellent energy management policies put in place by Kevin and his predecessor as well as wise investments by the town in upgrading equipment and facilities. However, this means that we may not be considered an ideal candidate for green communities funding. We may be “too green to be green”. Our schools are quite good and those are the biggest energy users in the town, which makes it hard to find additional savings. Most of the major improvements were made outside the 3 year window for which we could seek credit, so we may need to follow the formal process for seeking a waiver. The Green Communities Program uses the language in the green communities act for their governance, and they may not be flexible for them to go below a 15% reduction amount. Marcia noted that from the states perspective, they want to encourage communities to become green, we are already green, as such we may not be the ideal grant candidate.

The planning spreadsheet that Peregrine provides breaks the energy reduction improvements into priority 1, 2 and 3. It is intended to be used as a roadmap by whoever is implementing the changes. Priority 3 projects would be asset infrastructure projects, such as a boiler at the end of its useful life. Closing the police station and opening a new one would not do much for the baseline, if we know that this will be replaced soon, we would not include it in our baseline. We would not get a credit for the new building.

Street lights are often 10% of baseline total, we may reduce that number 30%. Our traffic lights have already been upgraded to LEDs. Water and Sewer are not paid for in the town budget, they are enterprise accounts and as such would not be included in the total. Wastewater accounts are usually left out for other towns. We have already upgraded to variable speed drives on these pumps as well. Kevin noted that there are some pumps we can not have variable speed drives on.

Some of the savings we account for in the report are not exactly low hanging fruit, such as replacing T8s at the schools with more efficient super T8s, not great savings, but it would save a building wide replacement.

We have an estimated 20% improvement in vehicle mileage in the report, based on 2mpg increase in efficiency in 5 years.

Matt suggested that as the town is already quite efficient, we may want to look for some unconventional methods to reduce energy use at facilities even more, such as a green roof to reduce air conditioning needs in the summer. Kevin noted that the middle school is not in active use during the summer. Steven Weisman mentioned that the community center might be a good candidate for a green roof based on how it is used.

We could make improvements at Pittaway, but it depends on the planned use. We should most likely leave this in the plan for now.

The committee agreed that it would be a good idea to discuss our situation with regards to the energy reduction requirements and need for a waiver with our State Senator. Steve Mitchell agreed to do this for the committee. We will try to approach this from the standpoint that we

have done an excellent job with energy conservation already and are deserving of Green Community Status based on our performance.

The Energy Reduction plan most likely needs to go before the town boards which will be making decisions on spending for the improvements in the plan. The Board of Selectmen and the School Board. The Selectmen meeting on the 23rd could be a good time to get this approved. Preston noted that this would be a good selling point for the Green Communities Designation.

In addition to the Energy Reduction plan itself, we need to provide documentation on the other requirements for green community designation. This includes documentation on the plan, what we have done, passing stretch code, include narrative plus the documentation on warrant article, vehicle purchasing policy, as of right siting etc. Carl will review the submission requirements on the GCA web site. Marcia and Kevin will review the Energy reduction plan draft to check for accuracy.

Matt and Kevin will work with Steven Weisman to finalize the baseline info. In particular, we need to resolve electric accounts for the Community Center pavilion, the electric account for the 76 Chestnut pumping station, determine which accounts are street lights vs traffic lights and which pumping stations are for sewer and which for water. We also need to look into the energy generated by the solar panels at the DPW facility on Ponderosa Road, the Howe Street Water treatment plant and the high school.