**Town of Shelburne Energy Committee Meeting**

**Minutes of Meeting held December 21, 2023**

**LOCATION: In person at Town Hall**

**PURPOSE: Monthly committee meeting**

**—Members present:** Pat Stevenson, Phil Bragdon, Jeff Boettner

**—Members on remote:** Tom Johnson

—**Observers/Guest:** Cynthia Boettner, Cyndee Fand, Lynn Benander

1. **Call to order:** Jeff Boettner called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM

**2. Approval of minutes:** Minutes of the Energy Committee meeting held

on 11/16/23 were reviewed. A motion to approve with a minor edit was made by Phil Bragdon, seconded by Pat Stevenson, and approved unanimously.

**3. Old business:**

**Solar panels with Lynn Benander, President Co-op Power and Northeast Biodiesel**

Lynn gave a brief presentation based on the attached document,

“**Understand Your Solar Options in Shelburne, MA”,** that she put together for our committee. The document lists solar options, websites to check for more info, financing, and what to watch out for before you sign on for any solar option.

She also informed the committee about a community solar option via **Sunwealth Community Solar based out of Cambridge, MA.**  Details of that organization are also attached.

The committee discussed having Lynn work with us in the future re solar options for residents. The possibility of doing a solar forum in 2024 will be put on the agenda for our March meeting. It should be noted that no funding can be provided from CFP grant money for outreach efforts involving strictly solar per our conversations with All in Energy crew.

**Mass Save Community First Update/Budget**

The committee welcomed Cyndee Fand who is our new Energy Advocate beginning January 2024. Cynthia has put together a list of responsibilities for the Energy Advocate which were approved by the All in Energy crew and she has discussed these responsibilities with Cyndee. See the attached document **“Shelburne Energy Efficiency Advocate Duties for 2024”** for details.

The All in Energy crew will work with Cyndee re onboarding and training.

Cynthia also provided the committee with year-end **“Community First Partnership Notes”** which are attached.

Tom presented a brief update on the CFP budget, which at the time was near zero as we await the Q2 and Q3 payments from Eversource, which will bring the balance up to about $7700.

**LED Streetlights - update**

Jeff reported that the Realterm Energy person that the streetlight committee was working with is no longer working for this company and that RTE is closed until early January, 2024. The committee plans to meet with RTE in January to discuss the following:

—options for lights

—adding fixtures for dimming

The lights inventory has been completed and there is a total of 102 lights thus far, albeit, there are a few lights that are questionable as to whether they are the town’s responsibility. Those include some church streetlights and lights at the Grange.

**Committee membership**

Phil mentioned that he knows someone who may be interested in joining the

Energy Committee and will keep us posted on that.

**New Business**

Tom encouraged all members to review an email sent December 19, 2023 by the Town Administrator, Terry Narkewicz regarding a new Town Manual that describes recommended procedures for committees that work for the town.

The manual is available on the town website.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

**Understand Your Solar Options in Shelburne MA**

The information included here on how to understand your solar options comes from these two public sites: [Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/frequently-asked-questions-about-solar-products-for-customers-in-massachusetts), [Massachusetts Clean Energy Center](https://goclean.masscec.com/clean-energy-solutions/solar-electricity/?utm_medium=cpc&utm_source=google&utm_campaign=brand) and [Energy Sage](https://news.energysage.com/tesla-solar-renting-comparison/)

**#1. Switch to a Clean Energy Supplier**[Municipal aggregation](https://goclean.masscec.com/article/buying-clean-electricity-options-in-massachusetts/?utm_medium=cpc&utm_source=google&utm_campaign=buyingcleanenergy) is a process in which municipalities purchase electricity in bulk on behalf of participating customers. Customers who live within that municipality may participate or not participate voluntarily. Municipal aggregation provides competitive pricing and ensures that the clean electricity contract is consumer-friendly. For info on [Municipal Aggregation](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/municipal-aggregation). For info on [Shelburne’s Municipal Aggregation program](https://colonialpowergroup.com/shelburne/).

**#2. Install Solar on your Property or Subscribe to a Shared Solar Array**

**Own a Solar Array on your Property**

You own your home, have a good site for solar, and can pay up front for a system. You own the system, and usually either make an upfront cash purchase or finance the solar electric system through a loan.

Buying your solar panel system makes the most sense if you have the money on hand to pay upfront for your solar panels, and anticipate being in your home long enough for the system to pay for itself. In these cases you can lock in or eliminate your monthly electricity bills for two to three decades in the future, while also increasing the value of your home.

Financing a solar purchase with a loan is another way to invest in solar without a large upfront costs, but which comes with the added benefits associated with owning your solar panels outright, such as increasing your home’s value.

If you’re interested in how much you can save by purchasing solar, financing a solar energy system with a loan or leasing solar panels, the [EnergySage Solar Calculator](https://www.energysage.com/solar/calculator/) provides a comparison of the upfront and monthly payments, as well as the potential 25-year savings associated with each option.

BEFORE YOU SIGN: Check the online rating and references for the installer to see that they have a good reputation doing projects like yours. Check the Energy Sage website for cost comparison. Get 3 quotes to compare costs and energy savings. Contracts need to include system size, specifications for the exact equipment being installed, total system cost, cost per watt of system size ($/w), estimated production, and payment terms. It should also specify all applicable warranty information, the project’s estimated start and completion dates, and a list of any subcontractors that are going to be used. It is recommended that an installer provide a minimum five-year workmanship warranty to protect equipment against defective workmanship, electric component breakdown, or significant degradation in electrical output. One year production guarantee from installer and 20 year performance warranty for the panels from manufacturer. Minimum of a ten-year product warranty for the inverters from date of sale to consumer for product workmanship and materials.

**Lease a Solar System on your Property**

Leasing solar panels may make the most sense if you want to power your home with solar but don’t want to pay upfront for the cost of the installation and don’t care as much about the increased home value associated with owning solar panels.

A third party company will own and operate the solar electric system on your property and provide some portion of the benefits to you, often with little or no upfront cost. Under this model, you are commonly offered a solar lease or power purchase agreement (PPA). You get a 10% to 20% discount on your electricity costs. Go to [Energy Sage](https://news.energysage.com/power-purchase-agreements-overview/?_gl=1*h2b5k9*_gcl_au*MTYwOTk3Njk1Ny4xNjg3MjkxNDI4) for a cost comparison.

BEFORE YOU SIGN: Check the online rating and references for the installer to see that they have a good reputation doing projects like yours. Compare initial cost of electricity, annual escalators, monthly fees, upfront fees, length of contract, who gets the assignment of the tax credits and incentives, option to purchase at what cost, cancellation fees, operations and maintenance costs, performance guarantee, what happens when the contract ends, what happens if you move prior to the end of the contract term.

**You Participate in a Community Solar Array**

Community solar is a great way to save money compared to rooftop solar. By joining a solar farm project in your area, you can save 10 to 25 percent on most of your electricity bill by receiving credits. With community solar, most subscriptions involve no upfront cost, guaranteed savings, and allow you to cancel anytime without any penalty fees. [Visit our marketplace](https://communitysolar.energysage.com/) to find a participating solar farm near you. Check the [Energy Sage cost comparison](https://communitysolar.energysage.com/projects?utility_slug=eversource-west&zip_code=01370)

BEFORE YOU SIGN: Check the online rating and references for the installer to see that they have a good reputation managing solar arrays. Compare the cancellation fee and how much of a discount you get.

**What is community solar?**

Community solar is a way for people to save money on their electric bill and support local clean energy.

**How does it work?**

* Participants purchase community solar bill credits  at a 25% discount to pay their electric bill.  For every dollar your electric bill is reduced by your community solar bill credits, you pay 75 cents.
* The community solar bill credits are generated by a solar array on Czajkowski Farms in Hadley MA .
* There's no sign-up fee or credit check
* Free cancellation at any time

**Where are the community solar bill credits coming from?**

Czajkowski Farms in Hadley, MA has an exciting agrivoltaics project that will support vegetable growth beneath solar panels while it generates almost $35,000 per year in Eversource bill credits for income-eligible subscribers!

**Who is eligible?**

• Individual households (both homeowners and renters) who are either on the Eversource discount rate (R2/R4) OR residing in an income environmental justice census tract

• Small businesses who are on the Eversource residential rate (R1/R3) AND located in an income environmental justice census tract

• See [discount rate info here](https://www.eversource.com/content/residential/account-billing/payment-assistance/discount-rate) and [environmental justice info here](https://mass-eoeea.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=535e4419dc0545be980545a0eeaf9b53)

**Learn more about the project and fill out our interest form at**https://www.sunwealth.com/communitysolar/kendrick  
Send a copy of your latest Eversource electric bill to communitysolar@sunwealth.com.

There are limited slots available and we plan to finish enrollment in the new year, so contact us soon if you're interested!

**For More Info:**

www.sunwealth.com/communitysolar

communitysolar@sunwealth.com   
(978) 968-3598

**Shelburne Energy Efficiency Advocate Duties for 2024**

(as agreed upon with All In Energy)

Blue text are things that are “if there is time” items

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Responsibility | Description | hours/week |
| Contact existing Salesforce leads whose status is unknown (could be up to 144) | * If customer needs assistance signing up for HEA or want info on HEAs, EA can help * If people need assistance with Mass Save after doing HEA/ getting other work done, can send to CFP support team * NOT working to generate new leads | Most of the EA’s time once trained, along with Quality Assurance (see below)  Possibly 2.5-3 hrs ongoing |
| Work with new customers that reach out (from past outreach) | * Route new interested individuals to the right pathway for HEA * Use CAPV and/or CFP Support or CAPV for complicated cases and to maintain partnership * Check in periodically with CAPV about customer status | Very few likely |
| Biweekly meetings and trainings | * Use biweekly meetings as opportunity to check in with HPC * Suggest to HPC potential opportunities for events * Check in with Program Manager and strategize/ask questions * Strategize about moderate income outreach | .75 |
| Activity tracking | * HPC tracks their activities * EA tracks their activities   (for outreach calls/assistance, EA tracks 1 month worth as 1 activity, but notes numbers of customers reached. Otherwise, each activity has it’s own entry) | .5 |
| Salesforce updating | * 144 existing leads * Can send residents having more complicated issues with Mass Save program to CFP support team (email to Serra, CFP Support and cc Tasha) |  |
| In person events w/ energy committee | * Grange Fair (Aug ‘24) * Farmers Market (Nov ‘24) * Likely third event, health fair |  |
| Quality assurance | * Create poll for evaluating quality * Send poll to residents * Analyze results, making suggestions for improvement * In the case of Revise customers, provide Revise with feedback | Likely during first weeks |
| Landlord and Renter outreach | * Potentially mailer * May follow up with Zoom session |  |
| Monthly E-Newsletter blurbs | * If tips for residents are beneficial to your work, coordinate with energy committee to submit something | .5 |
| Senior Center outreach | * Discuss the possibility of HPC working with Senior Center * EA and Program Manager can help strategize |  |