



**TOWN OF
BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

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***Minutes
Solar Committee
Wednesday, September 16th, 2020***

Committee members attending via Zoom video conference: Brendan Denehy, Maria Bechis, Jacob Solon, Dennis Comeau, Joel Shaklee.

Also present: Dennis Bechis

7:22pm Brendan opened the meeting. **Brendan** said we are meeting electronically under Executive Order 2020-04 and Emergency Meeting Orders #12 and #23, which allow for remote meetings. All committee members stated they were social distancing, some with others present in their homes, but not in the room. **Maria** was in attendance with **Dennis Bechis**. **Kelly** joined the meeting at **7:33** and **Patty** was not present.

Approval of minutes

Dennis moves to approve minutes from the last meeting, **Jacob** seconds. All in favor, minutes approved.

Agenda adjustments

Brendan asked to add to the agenda a discussion on what the committee would like him to report back to the selectboard at their next meeting.

Brendan's report from selectboard meeting

The selectboard received Dick Henry's proposal on Aug. 14th and it was discussed at their Aug. 24th meeting. **Brendan** shared the business of the Solar Committee's previous meeting on 8/12. He estimated that, based on Dick's layout of a la cart services and the projected timeframe of the services likely to be sought during this budget year, the committee should request **\$4500** of funding.

Brendan shared that the board was interested but was also interested in options to potentially reduce the cost. One selectboard member Dana Ketchum suggested the town seek membership in the nonprofit group Clean Energy NH in order to access some of the services Dick Henry is

offering for less cost. Two actions were taken by the selectboard. First, the decision on the proposal was tabled until the selectboard meeting on Monday 9/21; second, the board decided to seek membership in Clean Energy NH.

Jacob asked what aspects of Dick Henry's proposal the selectboard hopes to offset by joining Clean Energy NH. **Brendan** said the board believed that the organization can do all of the consultation work and supplying of information that Dick had offered. However upon inspection, **Brendan** found that the organization primarily offers non-personalized resources about permitting, regulations, and policy action on behalf of clean energy.

Maria asked if Clean Energy NH has any consultants of its own. **Brendan** said there are other consulting companies similar to Dick Henry's company DDH, but seeking their services would in essence entail researching and selecting a competitor to DDH and would not guarantee any cost savings.

Maria asked what the cost of membership in Clean Energy NH. **Brendan** said it is a **\$250** annual fee, which he deems to be worthwhile given the resources that would be made available. **Jacob** agreed and added that the personalized guidance offered by DDH would make the resources from Clean Energy NH even more valuable.

Jacob asked for details about how Brendan had arrived at his estimate of 45 hours for working with DDH in 2020. **Brendan** said he looked at the services related to writing and fulfilling and RFP, in addition to the hours of meeting with Dick, and calculated that it would sum to about 45 hours by the end of the year.

Kelly joined the meeting at **7:33**. Brendan summarized the meeting up to that point for her.

Dennis commented that he is in support of joining Clean Energy NH. He proposed the committee's message to the selectboard be that joining the organization will not be a replacement for the work that DDH would do, and that moving forward with an energy audit process will cost some money. **Joel** added that he agrees the committee will need the services of DDH to craft a plan for Brookline.

Review of Dick Henry's proposal

Brendan opened the floor to committee members for their input on Dick Henry's proposal.

Maria pointed out that one of the "Other services if requested" says DDH could evaluate the potential of installing solar panels on town buildings. She asked if Dick will consider evaluating the potential for free standing arrays rather than building-mounted arrays. **Brendan** said it will be best to clarify Dick what his meaning is by that detail, but that he interpreted the text to mean that DDH can evaluate the potential for whatever mounting types are suitable for the site, including roof-mounted and ground-mounted.

Dennis commented that the proposal looks comprehensive and includes everything the committee had previously discussed. **Jacob** agreed that the proposal is well written and clearly laid-out. Joel added that he appreciated the itemized list of services.

Brendan said he would take the committee's thoughts to the selectboard meeting on Sept. 21st. He will also reach out to Dick Henry to let him know the most recent updates.

Committee member updates

Brendan asked the committee to keep in mind that, due the unpredictability so far this year, we do not know for certain what the Town Meeting in 2021 will look like or if it will even be in March as planned. He suggested that the committee expect to be flexible with its planned timeline but continue to pursue its business until more is clear.

Jacob commented that he believes the committee can accomplish some important foundational steps this year related to energy efficiency and buildings upgrades which will better set the stage for investment in solar energy in the coming years.

Maria asked where Brendan expects to get \$4500 of funding for the DDH services. **Brendan** explained that the selectboard has some discretion on how to allocate available money in the budget since as the year goes on some costs are lower than expected and some are higher than expected. He highlighted that a strength of this committee's funding structure is that if the budget tightens later in the year, services with DDH can be ceased at any time and the expense will be spared.

Jacob asked if the committee is still considering visiting any of the installations Maria had identified. **Maria** said she can contact the various personnel and see if they would be interested in meeting. The committee plans to consider the possibility further in future meetings.

Set next meeting date

Meeting set for Wednesday September 23, 2020 at 7:15pm.

Meeting adjourned at **7:56**.

Minutes submitted by Jacob Solon.