



**TOWN OF  
BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

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***Minutes  
Solar Committee  
Wednesday, July 29, 2020***

Committee members attending via Zoom video conference: Brendan Denehy, Kelly Seeley, Maria Bechis, Patty Smith, Jacob Solon, Joel Shaklee, Dennis Comeau.  
Also present: Tad Putney, Dennis Bechis.

**7:16pm 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. Most committee members all stated they were social distancing, some with others present in their homes, but not in the room. **Maria** was in attendance with **Dennis Bechis**.

**Approval of minutes**

**Brendan** moves to approve minutes, **Dennis** seconds. 5 in favor, 2 abstain.

**Agenda adjustments if needed**

**Brendan** reminds the committee that it should not conduct business via email, only during meetings.

**Brendan** reminds committee that findings are due to the selectboard by October

**Review Dick Henry's presentation with full committee present**

**Patty** asked whether batteries are currently available. **Joel** clarified that lithium batteries are available, and capacitors are an emerging technology. **Patty** asked what free means in reference to batteries. **Jacob** clarified that this means excess energy can be stored and used later without purchasing.

**Maria** asked what Dick's recommendation to take steps prior to solar means. **Dennis** explained that the committee is planning to do an energy audit to find out what energy efficiency retrofits could be done. Reducing small loads, getting good window insulation, LED lighting. Brookline has successfully changed streetlights to LED recently and there are some good incentives for lighting retrofits. **Patty** asked who would do the energy audit and said she thinks Eversource will do one for free. **Brendan** said the town can put out a RFP to get offers. **Tad** comments that we will likely get a better value if we pay for an audit rather than getting a free one. **Kelly** said EEI, who worked with the Hollis schools, may be an option.

**Dennis** asked if Dick Henry has provided more information about the cost of his services.

**Brendan** said that he has emailed Dick but does not have that information yet.

**Patty** said that she is interested in Dick's comment that COVID-19 may make money available for our projects. **Brendan** added that if we have project proposals ready when those monies are available we will have a better chance of receiving some of that funding. **Maria** asked what the impact will be of COVID-19 on the energy usage of the schools. **Brendan** said that his experience with Keene State College has shown they are planning to increase air circulation.

**Tad** asked what the current status of other solar projects on Hollis schools. **Kelly** said that the schools are planning to do energy audits and she can share the RFPs when they are available.

**Patty** asked if town buildings are on Eversource. **Tad** said we buy power through The Nashua Regional Planning Commission and Constellation. **Dennis** commented that the billing procedure is convoluted and it will be difficult to predict changes in rates going forward.

**Brendan** pointed out that Dick said excess power generated on one building can be used to offset the usage of other buildings and be counted as one unit. This means if one site is better suited for solar, the town could take advantage of the increased productivity.

#### **Review of Brookline energy usage report**

Town buildings are spending about \$177,000 per year. Safety Complex is the biggest usage by far. Heating and cooling on this building is done with electricity. **Dennis** pointed out that we must keep an eye on demand charges, and **Kelly** said that demand charges have been the biggest surprise with the Hollis schools solar installation.

**Brendan** said that the Safety Complex's most significant load is electric heating and cooling.

**Dennis Brechis** said that based on the data it looks like the Safety Complex uses roughly the same amount of power throughout the year, so it may not be all due to heating and cooling.

**Dennis Bechis** said some key information to find out will be the number of building occupants throughout the day, whether electric/zone thermostats are being used, and what kind of lighting is used.

**Tad** asked whether the committee would like to focus on solar for individual buildings, or to look at projects that would make solar power available to the town at large. **Dennis** said the overall goal should be saving money for the town and residents. **Joel** agreed and added that he doesn't think we should clear extra land just for the purpose of solar. **Brendan** said the new DPW building may be an opportunity for a ground mount array. **Patty** thinks auditing town buildings is the best course of action. Committee agrees that the scope of projects for now should be limited to town buildings.

#### **Updates from committee**

**Maria** will be gathering information on MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, Milford, and Hanover solar installations. She is planning to contact them and will share info with the committee.

**Kelly** is hoping to find the documents from the Hollis Schools solar project, including materials used for community outreach.

**Jacob** said he has not sound any available financial incentives other than net meter metering. The town will most likely need to make these projects work purely on ROI. **Tad** commented that when he was on a committee looking into solar for the Transfer Station he found the same results, and that committee elected not to pursue solar.

**Brendan** will talk to the fire department to find out about any concerns they have regarding solar installations on town buildings. **Brendan** will also contact Dick Henry to find out details on his rates and what services he can offer.

The committee concluded that the next step should be getting more details about the potential for energy efficiency improvements to town buildings in order to make solar more cost effective. **Jacob** commented that even if solar is not pursued as a result of the committee's findings, any energy efficiency upgrades that can be made to town buildings will save money and will set the stage for solar in the future.

#### **Set next meeting date**

Next meeting is set for two weeks later on 8/12/20.

Meeting adjourned at **8:27**.

Minutes submitted by Jacob Solon.