

Solar Committee MINUTES – August 18th , 2022

Members present: Cynthia Beauvais, Rick Crouthamel, Al Grignon, Bill Nunan, Carrie Peabody

Absent: Kris Kelesian, Kathy Howell

Guest: Dona Cuppett

The minutes of August 11th were approved and sent to the town website for posting.

Member Updates:

- Kathy Howell has indicated that she will be leaving the committee due to other obligations.

Project Status/Tasks:

- Al Grignon provided the team with an updated outline of tasks associated with the ordinance project. The task sheet is attached for your reference. It will be updated as milestones are met or new tasks are required.

Moratorium mandate:

- The team discussed the moratorium mandate and will focus on Commercial Solar Panels (Solar Energy Systems or SES). The team agreed that a residential solar panel/SES ordinance may be needed which can later be determined by the Planning Board.
- Al Grignon cited that height restrictions, abutters, land use standards, EMF/EMR health concerns, roof mounting/glare and shielding are issues that require consideration.
- Team working on public Info sessions to hold for public to learn about commercial solar farms/SES facts, how they work, etc..
- Readfield ordinance has been put into a working draft format and select portions of Kris' ordinance will be incorporated into it.

Survey:

- Reviewed the draft survey structure and removed residential questions. Image of solar panels will be added to survey. Prefer survey one page with the address to mail the Jonesport Town Office via mail back or submit in person. Surveys will be anonymous. Suggestion to also put the survey on the town website for residents to print off, fill out and email to the solar committee at Survey@townofjonesport.com. The draft survey is attached for final review on September 1st.
- Rick, Bill and Carrie will access the Webmail account to monitor feedback. A scripted reply might be:

“Thank you for your feedback. We appreciate your interest in the work the Commercial Solar Panel Committee is doing. We encourage the public to join weekly meetings @5PM on Thursday evenings at the Town Office.”

Ordinance Discovery/Research:

- **Update on solar usage/grid prospects for future incentives (Carrie)**

- Public Utilities Commission (PUC): No PUC rep available to present, good information on website for program incentives, buy backs, and solar installation information. Community Solar programs are available for shared renewable energy projects allowing homeowners and businesses to share energy resources without installing solar panels on their own property. Administered by the Maine PUC.
 - Maine Green Power Program: The State of Maine has a Green Power Program that allows businesses and residents to enroll and match electricity they use with energy from Maine's renewable resources, i.e. solar, wind, hydro and biomass.
 - Versant and Join Solar offer incentives for 15% lower electricity costs. Ref: Ads from Mailers.
 - Net Energy Billing (NEB) program: credits for excess generation from distributed generation resources that is not consumed onsite, but provided to the grid. Offers energy savings by lowering utility bills and supports renewable energy generation.
 - Power purchase agreement (PPA): agreement between outfit and solar provider. Outfit provides the roof, solar provider installs/manages panels and provides power at a guaranteed price.
 - Solar Photovoltaic (PV) panels can be installed in arrays ranging from small homes to many acres (Solar farm) that can power entire towns. Mostly used with business, schools, and buildings.
- **Update on UMM expertise/National Resource Council of Maine (Rick and Dona)**
 - Contacted Dr. Gayle Kraus of UMM for suggestions for solar power experts to assist us in learning more about the subject. She put me in contact with Rick Scribner, a UMM instructor who has personal experience with home-based solar power systems in Maine linked to the Versant Power grid. Rick is building a second home in Chain Lake which will be totally off the grid. He could be available to work with us.
 - Dianne Tilton of Downeast Institute gave us the name of Danny Piper of Sundog Solar, a commercial solar installation company.
 - Document with handout links and research provided to team.
- **Online solar presentations available? (AI)**
 - Powershow.com offers solar energy presentations on a variety of areas from the history of the industry, operations, and energy solutions. Some sales pitching.
 - UMM/UMO
 - University of Washington online presentation re: solar power and creating energy from the sun. Demonstrates how solar works.
 - Chimbro CEO?
- **Contact Elaine Abbot, SCEC regarding experts in solar energy (Cynthia)**
 - Cynthia contacted Elaine Abbott at the SCEC who forwarded her email to Jen Peters. Jen is the Director of Community Development SCEC and is on the East Machias Planning Board. The board is also writing an ordinance and there are some challenges. Per Jen's email: "According to our CEO, without an ordinance, people can install a system without having an inspection, and that could be dangerous if they don't know what they are doing. The main reason we are creating the ordinance is to require a permit which means an inspection of any size system. Also, it gives the town some assurance that commercial and industrial solar energy systems are working with any applicable state regulatory agencies and comply with state law. For a private energy system, we are looking at the CEO as the approver. For commercial or industrial use, the planning board and CEO must approve."

Meeting schedule:

- **No meeting was held on Aug. 25 due to member conflicts with other town obligations.**
- **The next Solar Committee meeting will be held on September 1st at 5PM at the Town Office.**
Agenda attached.