

BOARD/COMMITTEE: Sustainability Committee

MEETING DATE: February 10 2021

TIME: Meeting was called to order at 7:10

PLACE: Video conference

Members Present: Francie Nolde, Chair; Richard Garrison, Member; Palmer Moore, member; Barbara Salzman, member; Suresh Jasrasaria, Member

Other attendees: Connor Reardon, LELD representative; Chris Delise, citizen; Robin Delise, citizen

Roll call: Chair Nolde here; Member Garrison here; Member Moore here; Member Jasrasaria here; Member Salzman here

Solar Bylaw: Moore commented that he would struggle supporting the bylaw because it places undue restrictions on small scale projects, and that currently without the bylaw there are no obstacles to small scale solar projects; Salzman stated that the definition of small scale solar limits capacity to 10kwh which may be too restrictive for many homeowners, that the current LELD limit is 15kwh, and that residents' electricity usage may increase in the future if they convert to heat pumps and/or buy Electric Vehicles; Salzman questioned the bylaw restricting solar on farmland as there are farms where crops are grown under elevated solar panels; others noted that there may be farmers who would like to use part of their land for solar; there was also comment that solar should be allowed on Town Center residences without requiring a Special Permit; Salzman suggested this Committee determine what changes we would like to see in the bylaw and share these with the Planning Board; this Committee will meet together solely to discuss the solar bylaw next week; LELD representative Reardon notified the Committee that LELD has added additional funds to the current solar rebate program;

Climate Change Survey review of results (*see below): Jasrasaria presented survey results; there were approximately 315 total responses which Jasrasaria considered good representation of the Town; Jasrasaria asked the Committee about next steps and future surveys; Garrison suggested the Committee focus on educating the community and the Town leadership, making a presentation to the Select Board, and doing an emissions study, leading to a carbon reduction plan and climate action plan; Garrison stated that an emissions study would be the fundamental starting point followed by a follow-up assessment 5 years later; Chris Delise commented that a presentation to the Select Board which would include slides and graphics should be made; Chris Delise and Suresh offered to put together a presentation; Moore stated that people want to know what to do about climate change now, that we should weave information into the Sense of the Meeting at the May Town Meeting, and that we need to keep momentum going while we work on the bigger picture;

Sustainability Policy- Boxborough Select Board Meeting March 1st to approve or not; Town Meeting Sense of the Meeting: Nolde told the Committee that the Town Administrator and the Select Board have said that we should either have a Sustainability Policy voted on by the Select Board or a Sense of the Meeting voted on at Town Meeting; Garrison stated that the first step is to get a Sense of the Meeting; Chris Delise said that in that case a Sustainability Policy might have to wait a year to be voted on at Town Meeting and that a Town vote would insure that the policy would be followed and carried on over the years; Salzman stated that it was her understanding that the Select Board was planning to vote on adopting a Sustainability Policy; Nolde said that she would write the Town Administrator to confirm that the Select Board will vote to adopt the Sustainability Policy, and that in addition we should go before Town Meeting for a Sense of the Meeting Vote; Robin Delise stated that we should have the Town Meeting approve the Sustainability Policy and that it may need to wait a year, and that this year when doing the Sense of the Meeting we can communicate the survey results and highlight the Select Board Statement of support; Chris Delise said that asking for a Sense of the Meeting will help educate people;

MassEnergize- plan and budget for FY22: Jasrasaria stated his desire to develop a MassEnergize website for Boxborough; Nolde told the Committee that we have \$500 in this year's budget and that the Finance Committee needs to agree to allocate \$700 to our Committee for next year in order for us to be able to move forward with MassEnergize; Nolde informed the Committee that she attended the Finance Committee's meeting and that some expressed skepticism about MassEnergize and wanted us to use the Town website instead to promote carbon reduction programs and provide information/resources; as well, there was a suggestion from Finance Committee member that we join with Littleton for a joint website; Brad Hubbard-Nelson from MassEnergize will give a short presentation at the next FinCom meeting.

Action Items:

Nolde: Send Chris and Robin most recent version of solar bylaw.

Nolde: Set up meeting for next Wednesday to review solar bylaw.

Jasrasaria and Chris Delise: Work on presentation for Select Board.

Attendees for Monday, March 1, Select Board, 8pm: Warrant Article- Barbara, Richard, and Francie

Attendees for Tuesday, March 2, Finance Committee, 7:30pm: MassEnergize-Francie, Suresh, Chris, Barbara

Attendees for Wednesday, March 3, Sustainability Committee to finalize Solar Bylaw- all

Next meeting: March 10, 2021

List of exhibits used:

Climate Change Awareness Survey Results as of 1/28/2021 Noon

*Climate Change Survey review of results:

Key Takeaways of the survey are that Boxborough residents are:

1. Open minded about climate change
2. Want to learn more about how climate change impacts us here in Boxborough
3. Want to take action to mitigate the impacts of climate change

Overall Summary of the survey is that Boxborough residents:

1. Believe that climate change is one of the most important issues of our time and they are concerned about its impacts on our community
2. Would like to see examples of how climate change can impact us in Boxborough and would like to learn more about climate change science and projections from unbiased, authentic sources
3. Would like some recommendations from the Town of Boxborough, and many also expressed interest in a detailed plan of action
4. Believe action is needed now before it's too late, and they are ready to get started on some easy things ASAP
5. Believe that Government, Business and Community partnerships should lead the way