

New Energy Resource Committee  
5/28/2015 Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Alan Pease, Paul McGrail, Roberta Flashman, Cathy Kristofferson, Mark Haines

Moved and seconded, voted unanimously Cathy as note taker.

Moved and seconded, voted unanimously Paul as chair.

It is unknown if Nancy Chew wishes to remain on the committee. Mark will check with her.

After discussion, it was decided that the committee would be open with a maximum of 7 members. Members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

(For definitions of common solar acronyms used throughout these Minutes, see <http://www.seia.org/about/solar-energy/solar-faq/what-solar-acronyms-organization-definitions-are-necessary-know>)

Discussion of possible sites, town properties and buildings, for a solar installation: The only real options of buildings are the Ashby Elementary School roof, Town Hall or the Fire Station. None likely provide enough square footage.

The Town as a whole uses approximately 14gWh electricity annually. The Town of Ashby municipal electric usage is 135MWh. Roberta ran the software app PVWatts to determine capacity of just the cleared section of the field by the Fire Station. It would provide 1.6gWh which could provide \$450,000 SRECs and \$315,000 in electricity.

Does the NERC want to pursue getting power for Ashby the municipality, or for all residents together with the Colonial Purchased Power Agreement (PPA)?

Does the NERC want to pursue working in conjunction with Ashburnham?

Does the NERC want to look into what it would take to use the capped landfill? Previous estimate was \$1M to run 3 phase power to the grid.

The apple orchard on Foster Rd is 49 acres/24 cleared. It can not be used for residential housing without a haz/mat clean-up due to arsenic and DDT in the soil. It would, however, be able to have a solar installation without such a clean-up.

Between the SRECs and available grants, the solar installation has the potential to pay for itself.

The ideal goal is to say that Ashby generates all of its own power.

Possibility to have 2 solar farms for the municipality, and 1 community solar which shareholders would get SRECs and tax credits. Community Solar would allow the shareholders to receive tax credits for 30% of installed cost and SREC payments after installation.

Paul has been investigating community solar options. Currently there are about 1200 homes in Ashby. We could also open up the bulk purchase of solar components (PV Panels, racks, inverters) to the townspeople.

Everything has to go live by 2016 to qualify for the federal tax credits that make this possible for Ashby.

The PPA is not governed by net metering caps.

NMRSD may be interested in participating, \*Mark will check on their intentions. \*Mark will also find out what options are possible for using the orchard.

The solar installation on town load requires an RFP with the existing Colonial Power PPA. The town would run the solar farm.

\*Roberta takes the action to run PVWatts on each possible site. Parameters will be facing south, 33 degrees, \$3.60 per installed watt. \*Cathy will create maps to go with each.

The committee agreed that putting PVs on any of the possible building is not feasible because the benefit would be too low.

The solar installation would be able to provide electric rates at 6 or 7 cents less per kWh than Unitil.

>Looking at ground installations: capped landfill, orchard, fire station lot, and behind the elementary school.  
>Hoping to offer: bulk purchase options of PVs for home owners, buy into community solar, or use PPA with solar energy.

Community solar requires at least 10 meters.

It takes 8 acres to install a 1 MWh PV System. It takes 4.4 acres to produce a max of 1 GW of electricity per year. For comparison, a 24 panel PV system produces about 5kWh and occupies approximately 900 sq feet. See <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy13osti/56290.pdf> for details.

Alan found Municipal Energy Technical Assistance grants are available from DOER which could provide funding for RFP creation and consultant possibilities.

There are no neighbor issues with the landfill, the orchard, or behind the elementary school. The high visibility of the Fire Station field could present issues.

\*Paul will gather information about generating the RFP.

\*Alan will look into getting a copy of Leominster's recent RFP for the solar farm along the rail line by the airport.

\*Paul will look into Fitchburg's RFP for a recent installation at Applewilde, and check out timelines.

\*Cathy will look into creating a web page for the NERC on the Ashby town site.

It would be good to have a town info meeting about solarizing Ashby before school is out. We should look at creating info sheets for the 3 potential offerings. \*Roberta will make a start at bulk purchase/solarize Ashby.

\*Mark will start the community solar one, and \*Paul the one for the PPA option.

\*Mark will call Carter Scott of the business in Townsend that builds net zero homes with community solar to see if he can come in to our next meeting to discuss community solar issues and options.

Next meeting set for June 9<sup>th</sup> at 7pm in the Town Hall Land Use room

Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Kristofferson