

Sandisfield Green Committee Minutes Aug 9, 2018

In Attendance: George Riley, Alex Bowman, Anina Carr, Larry Dwyer

Larry Dwyer agreed to take minutes.

The meeting began at 7:00 PM with a discussion of the Open Meeting law whereas the Green Committee and is a public body and subject to the Open Meeting Rules.

We reviewed the Green Communities program that was presented by Jim Barry on July 31, 2018.

We discussed making a change to the Town of Sandisfield Solar bylaw to conform to the criteria for the Green Communities Program, but it was decided that this would be tabled for the time being.

Criteria #1 was discussed, and Larry Dwyer suggested that 16 acres of town land at the Center cemetery be designated for a 4-Megawatt solar farm, but it was decided that we would approach the Planning Board to consider designating all town- owned land as-of-right zoning for renewable energy, alternative energy with no special permit required to comply with the #1 criteria of the Green Community program. The Town would still retain all the rights pertaining to it as a landowner.

Criteria # 2 was discussed concerning the expediting permit process. Jim Barry had told the committee that all that was needed was a letter from the KP Law firm or the BRPC.

Criteria # 3 was discussed concerning the Eversource energy efficiency audit. The Eversource energy audit was completed but not submitted to the town yet. It was noted that a META grant was applied for the ASHRAE audit. To comply with criteria #3, we need to establish an energy usage baseline for the past two years using the Mass Energy Insight software. After establishing a benchmark, energy usage would be required to be reduced by 20% over five years. Larry Dwyer agreed to apply for and use the software and Anina Carr would retrieve data from the town files. Some of the energy data is already available online.

Criteria #4 was discussed about purchasing full efficient vehicles. Trucks, police, ambulance and fire vehicles are exempt. If hybrid SUVs were purchased for the DPW, fire or police department, a portion of the purchase would be paid by a Green Community grant.

Criteria #5 was discussed concerning new energy efficient building codes. A bylaw would be required to comply with the Stretch Code, however, energy savings is expected to more than offset any increase in expenses to meet the new code.

The role of the Berkshire Regional Planning Committee was discussed as per the email below from Lauren Gaherty:

From: Lauren Gaherty [mailto:Lgaherty@berkshireplanning.org]

Sent: Monday, August 6, 2018 4:13 PM

To: Ventresco, Fred <TownAdmin@sandisfieldma.gov>

Cc: Barry, Jim (ENE) <jim.barry@state.ma.us>

Subject: Grant for Green Community Assistance

Hello Fred –

I am pleased to say that BRPC has received its contract from the Dept. of Energy Resources to aid Sandisfield in its pursuit of Green Communities designation. I would like to set up a kickoff meeting with you and other town officials to lay out a strategy to meet the 5 Green Communities Criteria. Here is a quick summary:

Adopt zoning to site renewable energy businesses or projects as a by-right use. I didn't find your zoning bylaws on your website, but my suspicion is that you will need to amend your zoning bylaws. We'll help you figure this out.

Develop an Energy Reduction Plan to reach a 20% reduction in energy use in town-owned facilities and fleets. Adopt an Energy Efficient Vehicle Policy. Adopt the Stretch Building Code.

BRPC, partnering with Jim Barry of DOER, can help Sandisfield investigate these criteria to see if Green Communities is a good match for the town. Let's discuss how you and the Select Board want to proceed. If you agree a kickoff meeting would be beneficial, it would be a good idea to have a representative from the Planning Board, ZBA and facilities management.

Feel free to call or email me about next steps.

Best,

Lauren Gaherty, Senior Planner
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201
Pittsfield, MA 01201
Mon. – Thurs. 8:00 – 5:30
(P) 413-442-1521, ext. 35
(F) 413-442-1523

Both Jim Barry and Lauren Gaherty will be attending the Planning Board meeting on Tuesday August 14, 2018. Larry Dwyer also will be in attendance.

The Town of Sandisfield could expect a minimum of \$125,000 annually in energy related grants for fiscal year 2019 if all five criteria are met by the deadline date of October 26, 2018. A special town meeting would be required to approve the bylaw changes. Dolores Harasyko supplied to the committee a ten-point procedure for applying for bylaw changes. In order to meet the deadline, the Green Team would need to work very fast to meet the five criteria.

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:27 PM.

Submitted by
Larry Dwyer