

# Waltham Energy Action Committee

Thursday 7pm, October 11, 2012

Public Meeting Room, Government Center, 119 School St.

## Minutes

---

### Members Present:

Kathy Randel, Leo Keightley, Eileen Zubrowski, Melissa Downes, Tony Dover, Emily Starr

### Others Present:

Bob Ferrone (West Suburban Chamber of Commerce, Sustainability Subcommittee)

Lonna Carter (new visitor, Waltham resident)

Jonathan Mankus (new visitor, Waltham resident)

David Johnson (new visitor, Waltham resident)

Jim Mniece

Mayor McCarthy

---

agenda in [blue](#)

**Ms. Randel called the meeting to order at 7PM.**

### Welcome

- Due to the attendance of three new visitors and Mayor McCarthy, we introduced ourselves.
- In order to optimize time at the meeting for the Mayor, the agenda item "Upcoming projects update" was discussed first.

### [Accept September minutes - Kathy](#)

Leo mentioned the ToDo list has to be updated per the September meeting before the September minutes can be approved. Also, Melissa has an entry change regarding the Connors pool.

### [Geothermal Update - Leo](#)

- Leo said that he is on a new "Geothermal Rink Committee" which is formed to review the latest proposal and time line that Thermo Source, an energy service company (ESCO), has provided to the City. The Rink Committee's first meeting will take place on Monday, 22-Oct-'12.
- Tony asked when rink lease is up for renewal, because the State may want to help out with improvements.  
Leo will check on the lease renewal date.

### [Green Communities Update - Stephen](#)

- Eileen said she found a time for the next meeting: 22-oct., 6pm, which will address zoning issues (Criteria 1 and 2).
- With respect to As of Right wording, Lonna mentioned the use of "renewable" may risk implication its meaning is intended to be as recently defined by the FTC (Fed Trade Commission.)
- Eileen noted that Stephen has asked to have the list of green companies and what they're doing, for the 22-Oct meeting.

### [Adopt a Building Proposal Review - Tony](#)

Tony noted the Library (a top candidate for the Adopt a Building concept) was discussed with the Mayor. (see Upcoming projects update below).

### **Ecofest, MassSave and Nadene Stein updates – Eileen**

The Route 128 Council is planning an event that is unofficially referred to as an "ecofest" to take place a year from now on the Waltham common. Mel and Eileen attended the first meeting. Music and Food will be part of the event. The focus of the event is sustainability and saving money. Volunteers are needed. Organizations currently involved are: the West Suburban Chamber of Commerce, The Nelson Companies, WEAC, and Bentley and Brandeis Universities.

- Bob noted, from a business perspective, it would be difficult to get businesses to a Saturday event on a municipal common. Possibly a 1 day seminar with businesses would pull businesses together more than going to a park on Saturday.
- It was mentioned it might be good to get schools involved and that is being worked on: Nadene Stein, Principle of Whittemore School (and President of the Waltham Land Trust), may attend a meeting or two. Eileen said WEAC may work with Nadene on energy programs at schools. Amy Gortler is also involved in school activity.

### **Web Page Update - Emily**

Emily met with Waltham IT people and now has access to the WEAC website. So far she has updated the list of members. Anyone who notices things that could be updated should tell Emily.

### **DOER Webinar on Green Ribbon Schools Award Program Update - Amy**

Amy Gortler wrote up an outline which Kathy can make available to WEAC. This will be presented to Nadene.

### **Chamber Sustainability Committee Update - Bob Ferrone**

Bob said the West Suburban CoC Sustainability Subcommittee is engaged and is trying to create a media event to get more visibility for itself and its agenda. Possibly WEAC can join them in a presentation on The Waltham Channel. The Sustainability Subcommittee is also trying to get NSTAR or NGrid to education small companies about energy efficiency: How can small companies manage their energy?

- Bob made a point that groups advocating sustainability and expense control through energy efficiency are going to have to connect to get more sustainability traction: Small and big businesses, WEAC, the CoC, the Rt 128 Council, media messages, schools, etc. We need to decide what do we want to go after (for example: businesses, and/or individuals). Maybe we can arrange a 1 day session at one of the Universities to work on this collaboration.

Bob mentioned a team at Bentley (Rick's Ocha's team) as a collaborator. Kathy pointed out they're already working with us on social media.

### **Disband the Complete Streets Subcommittee vote - Leo**

no discussion

### **Forum – vote to hold it - Kathy**

no discussion

### **Upcoming projects update -Kathy**

Note: Coordinating WEAC projects with Mayor McCarthy's objectives is something of high priority with the Committee. The Mayor's visit at this meeting provided an opportunity to do that coordination and was the focus of work on this agenda item.

Kathy asked the mayor what she wants the committee to focus on.

Mayor McCarthy first addressed the fire and subsequent delay of activation of the Photo Voltaic (PV) electric power generation system installed on Schools and the Municipal Center last year.

The fire was detected by a passing jogger (not by an alarm).

The Mayor engaged The Cadmus Group, Inc., of Waltham, to analyze the whole system.

The PV system was kept off line until improvements in wiring and safety were complete.

- Safety of students, school staff, and others was the top priority (ahead of electric cost savings)
- The PV system now has new alarms wired directly to the 911 system.
- The Fire Department has been trained on fighting a PV electric fire

For example: water cannot be used.

The entire Waltham PV installation is now on line, producing power.

Other US cities have researched Waltham's improvements and implemented them for their systems.

The Mayor noted there has been a lot of work analyzing municipal and school buildings:

Address the first 1 or two buildings to get low hanging fruit.

- Govt Center and City Hall are preferred for the first pass
- Melissa asked if we can do the library also, and the Mayor said yes.
- There is money available for work on the initial buildings.
- See Don Cusano to set up audits for the two buildings.

The old Bright and Banks schools have converted from oil to gas heat.

- The Community Center conversion was completed earlier.

Regarding the GC Energy Plan, the Mayor said the next step is to take care of the zoning changes required for Criteria 1 and 2. So far there is no update from the Council.

- Clearing plan through school committee has to wait for the zoning changes.

Kathy brought up the Planning Department.

Tony asked if the new Planner can come to WEAC meetings. The Mayor said yes.

Kathy mentioned federal programs providing money for environmental improvements.

- Where should we send applications for these grants? The Mayor said Planning.

WEAC members requested hiring a Planner with sustainability capabilities.

Tony mentioned taking advantage of additional savings from the City's PV system through the Forward Capacity Market.

- The Mayor said she doesn't know about this and to bring it up with Joe Pedulla.

Transportation issues

Melissa brought up several transportation agendas: MBTA access, Bicycling, Complete Streets, and the Mass Central Rail Trail (noting she had just personally inspected the Trail route in Waltham from the old Poloroid property to Beaver St. and Waverly Oaks Rd.

- On bicycling, The Mayor said (referring to some input she has received from John Allen concerning parking and lane markings at the new Main Street Marketplace) if there is a specific recommendation that she will review it.
- Concerning the Rail Trail, Mayor McCarthy noted that Dan Driscoll (DCR) who worked on the River Walk is now working on Rail Trail. She also noted that the Berry Farm Parcel (20.87 acres of undeveloped land between the Poloroid developed area and Lunda St., containing a state certified vernal pool) is to remain undeveloped and held in trust, to be transferred to Waltham in 20 years. This Parcel is between the Rail Trail and Prospect Hill Park. Rail trail improvements

are part of the development plans for the old Poloroid property. and may include getting the Trail across Rt. 128.

Kathy asked about progress on "LED Streetlights." The Mayor said there may be progress after some billing issues are straightened out.

**Cadmus – vote to contact - Kathy**

no discussion

**Additional items**

Eileen said she received Email from NSTAR about an up tick in requests from Waltham for home energy audits. There was some discussion of possible reasons. Outreach at "Waltham Day" seemed a likely source of interest.

**Closing**

Next Meeting – November 08, 2012 - Public Meeting Room, Government Center, 119 School St.  
The committee adjourned at 9:05 PM.