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**Sharon Energy and Environment Commission
Meeting Minutes
Sharon Town Hall January 13, 2022, at 5PM**

Present: Chair, Lyn Mattoon, Jan Dudek, Katy Kinsolving, Roger Liddell, Michael Nadeau, Doug Rick. Absent: Oscar Martinez. Town Selectmen Casey Flanagan joined the meeting.

1. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the December 16, 2021, meeting, were approved. Mike made a motion to approve the minutes. Doug seconded the motion, all voted to approve.
2. **Budget:** Lyn brought up the SEEC budget request for the next FY year. The current annual SEEC Budget is \$800. All agreed to request \$1000 for next year's the budget.
3. **Solar Project Update:** Doug gave an update on the solar project at Sharon Center School.
 - The draft power purchase agreement was delivered to the Selectmen. The lawyer for the Town of Sharon, Randall DiBella, reviewed the agreement and had concerns, some of which were based on a lack of familiarity with solar industry terminology. Coincidentally, Mr. DiBella is also the town lawyer for the Town of Washington, CT, which is also working with the Green Bank on a solar project. Emily from the Green Bank met with him to address issues in both towns' agreements. They are still working on clarifying some of the language. The Sharon Selectmen will meet with Dibella and the Green Bank soon to clear up concerns and finalize the agreement.
 - At the January 10, 2022 Board of Education meeting, the Board formally endorsed the concept of installing solar panels in the Nature Preserve at Sharon Center School (see [minutes of Board of Ed](#)).
 - Planning and Zoning have just added some amendments about solar regulations. (Arrays cannot be higher than 18 ft off the ground.) Selectman Flanagan had questions about the timing of other approvals before the Town signs power of purchase agreement. The contractor for the array installation will be in charge of the building permits
4. **Update Housatonic State Park:** Mike gave a report on the DEEP instigated tree carnage at the State Park. There was a zoom meeting to address the issue, during which DEEP officials apologized for not involving the public earlier. However, they are going ahead with plans to remove most of the tagged trees, despite the concerns expressed by several experienced arborists. Only 7 trees were removed from the "kill" list. As the tree removal continued members of the public picketed. During the tree removal two bald eagles and a juvenile were flushed out of the pine trees. The protestors tried to contact the Attorney General's office to stop the action but were unable to reach anyone.

Next steps: On January 26, 2022, the Council of Environmental Quality is having a meeting about the tree fiasco. This meeting will provide a forum for speaking about legal means of addressing the problems within DEEP. Lawyers Hearn and Ainsworth will be at the meeting. Mike will send SEEC members further information (zoom link, etc.) about the meeting.

- 5. Update on Composting:** Selectman Casey Flanagan gave an update. The composting program is floundering due to cost. Hauling the organic waste is 7 times more expensive than hauling the regular trash. The joint towns of Sharon and Salisbury have applied for grant, but so far have been unsuccessful. Salisbury Selectman Curtis Rand is very supportive of the program but concerned about the expense. Residents who participate are not charged. Mike suggested that local farms might be interested in the organic material if it did not include meat. Katy suggested that the towns contact NOFA (Northeast Organic Farming Association) and BAV (Berkshire Agricultural Ventures) to identify interested farmers.

Lyn added that the larger waste issue needs to be addressed. Barbara Bettigole is putting together work on a fix-it day. Katy has info from a fix-it day sponsored by town of Princeton which she will send to Casey and Barbara Bettigole.

- 6. Town Hall Parking Lot Drainage.** Mike has been trying to get in touch with Brent re setting up a meeting with the engineer for parking lot to discuss green infrastructure/ plant barriers to help mitigate storm water run-off. Casey and Mike will work together on this. Casey said that preliminary drawings have been submitted for public comment. Currently there are plans for 2 EV charging stations in the new parking lot.
- 7. SEEC newsletter:** KK reported that she had been holding the SEEC newsletter release for update on the Housatonic Park tree situation and for a firm date for the April road clean up. Katy also asked each SEEC member to give her two names and email addresses for the newsletter mailing list.
- 8. Road Clean Up** SEEC members agreed to consider hosting the clean up on Saturday, April 2 with a 'rain or snow' date of April 9th.
- 9. Climate Change.** This topic was tabled until next month's meeting to give it the time it deserves.
- 10. New Business:** Roger spoke about SEEC addressing net metering issues. Those who can afford solar panels get the benefits of cheaper electricity, while lower income households are getting stuck with paying the higher electrical bills to support the grid. California is trying to address this issue. CT is re-evaluating net metering for 2022.
- 11. Adjournment:** Mike made a motion to adjourn, Roger seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.

The Next SEEC Meeting: February 10 at 5:00PM.