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By Linda Amerighi at 11:05 am, Nov 17, 2023

MINUTES

Sharon Energy and Environment Commission
Special Meeting
November 15, 2023

Present: Doug Rick, Lyn Mattoon, Katy Kingsolving, Shrevie Shepherd, Roger Liddell, Oscar Martinez, Mike Nadeau, Absent: Helena Barnes

The Commission was joined by community members as well as John Brett, a newly elected Selectman of Sharon

Lyn began the meeting asking for the approval of the October minutes. **APPROVED**

Lyn informed the members that there will be a town meeting on November 29, 2023, concerning the solar array at the Sharon Center School. This will be followed by a town referendum to be held on January 5, 2024. The issues our committee faces due to all the delays are: will the Purchase Price Agreement for electricity increase, and will the Green Bank remain committed to the project.

Doug reviewed the history of the agreement with the Green Bank for the sake of the community members attending the meeting, outlining the great financial savings for the community over the next decade as well as the vital importance of switching to renewable energy to reduce global warming. Most important, according to the current contract, the agreement with the Green Bank allows the school to bank energy collected during the summer, and credit it for use during the winter. This arrangement with Eversource would no longer apply if the current contract is not honored.

Mike, Lyn, and Doug visited the proposed site of the solar array to determine what landscaping will be appropriate and needed to shield the panels from the neighbors' views. Mike (a highly regarded landscape architect) proposed extensive planting of native evergreens, bushes and perennial plants. The landscaping he proposes will be excellent for pollinators and promote biodiversity. The land currently is overgrown with aggressive invasives. Mike will prepare a rough estimate for this landscaping. **TO DO: Mike**

The Chairman of the board of education has expressed support of this project and the possibility of paying for some of this landscaping. Since this cost will be assumed by the taxpayers, Doug is looking into federal and state grants. **TO DO: Doug.** It was also proposed that we approach Verogy to get clarity about their landscaping plans.

John Brett asked if the land designated for the solar array was indeed being used by the school. According to the current custodian the area is no longer used by the school, and many of the former installations for the Nature Trail are in significant disrepair. Mike's planting plan will support the former nature train.

As the Town Meeting on the project is scheduled for November 29, Lyn will investigate our best strategy for countering misinformation and informing the public about the project. The commission approved payment for an ad to be placed in the Lakeville Journal. **TO DO:** Lyn

Next on the agenda was the issue of herbicide application on property owned by the town on the edges of White Hollow Road. The issue was explained to the new Selectman. John Brett, asking that he bring this issue up at the next Selectmen meeting.

To further educate the community on native plants and the importance of maintaining biodiversity, as well as other environmental issues, Lyn suggested that we have a shelf at the library dedicated to these issues. Lyn to contact the library about such a proposal. **TO DO: Lyn**

Monthly SEEC meetings will be moved to the first Tuesday of the month at 5 30pm.

Meeting adjourned 6:35PM

Respectfully Submitted, Katherine Shepherd, SEEC Secretary

Next meeting: December 6