

## Select Board meeting minutes

February 12, 2018 at 7pm, Town Hall Meeting Room

**In attendance:** Select Board Chair Sarah Reynolds, Select Board members Beth Bandy and Marguerite Willis, Capital Improvement/ Planning Committee member Tony Walker, and Franklin Regional Council of Governments Senior Land Use Planner Patricia Smith

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:02pm. This meeting was initially posted as an All Boards Meeting should a quorum of any other Board/ Committee/ Commission be present.
2. Everyone introduced themselves. Jim Barry from the Department of Energy Resources presented a projected slide show to the attendees, outlining what the Green Communities designation offers and the criteria required to become eligible.
3. Jim is employed by the Green Communities division of Department of Energy Resources to work with local towns in western Massachusetts. The requirements to achieve a Green Communities designation are a lot simpler than previous years. The purpose of the program is to help municipalities fund energy efficiency projects to help towards the State's carbon reduction goals and to help realize future cost savings with improved energy efficiency. The State provides the designation and grant program, Mass Energy Insights energy tracking and analysis tool, META grants, and their website filled with tools and resources, [www.mass.gov/energy/greencommunities](http://www.mass.gov/energy/greencommunities).
4. Pat Smith from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) mentioned that the Town has META funds from 2016 available for technical assistance from the FRCOG should the Town decide to go forward. Their technical assistance provides help with criterion 1 and 3 (energy reduction plan – where the audit info comes in). This ends in May unless something changes. The Town also has META funds available from 2017 to complete an energy audit which provides a cost-benefit analysis. The FRCOG is using its own FRQ process to find an energy auditor.
5. If The Town is interested in pursuing a Green Community designation, we would submit our application by the October deadline for funds to be released the following January. The minimum available for any one town is \$125,000 plus additional based on population/ per capita. The goal is to fund energy efficiency projects.
6. The energy audit will shed light on priorities.
7. We can choose to include it the regional school in our audit or not, and postpone including at a future date after addressing initial projects. The school can pursue a META grant for an energy audit without being a Green Community, but cannot pursue Green Community designation because they have no land use zoning to amend which is required in order to meet one of the criterion.
8. Discussing how residents can benefit from these funds, all are eligible for a no cost Mass Saves energy audit. For those who cannot afford it, the Town can choose to fund the necessary 25% match a resident pays for energy savings projects from its Green Communities funds. There are other creative options to help residents benefit from the Green Communities funds.
9. The five criteria are dictated by statute in the legislation.

10. Criteria #1: “As-of-right siting can change the zoning for Town owned land. Approx. 1-2 acres, for minimum of 250kW Ground-Mounted Solar array on public land qualifies. Some Towns may want to include additional requirements to create a zoning bylaw for solar projects. To meet the requirement the Town must zone for a viable site, regardless of whether the intergeneration capacity is available, as long as it is not by special permit. It would then need to pass as a General Bylaw by majority vote at Town Meeting.
11. Criterion #2: letter from Town Counsel
12. Criterion #3: Establish the energy use baseline and adopt a five year plan. The goal is to reduce the baseline usage by 20%.
13. Criterion #4: purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles.
14. Criterion #5: minimize life-cycle costs using the building code. Town Meeting votes to adopt the stretch code. The State has one building code, and there is one optional stretch code that can be adopted, offered by BBRS as of 2009. It is based on the Energy Star for Home program. This is for new construction only, no need to upgrade. The base code adopted January 1 has caught up to the stretch code. The difference in cost is the amount needed to fund a HERS Energy Rater when designing/building which is required by Stretch Code for new residential construction’s energy related aspects.
15. In Franklin County 21 of 26 towns are Green Communities. Builders in this area are no longer surprised by the stretch code. If considering a new building there are cash incentives for new energy resources. Talk to the utility companies before designing, to get the credit for incentivizing.
16. Adjourned at 8:30pm

Draft minutes until approved by the Select Board

Respectfully submitted by Peg Dean

Documents viewed:

Green Communities Designation and Grant Program: Program Guidance, August 2017

Green Communities Designation and Grant Program: Criterion 1 Overall Guidance, Fall 2013

Green Communities Designation and Grant Program: Criterion 1 Guidance, July 2013