

Community Shared Solar Brookline Working Group

Minutes

04/08/2015, 6:00 pm, room 408, Town Hall

Jenny Fariborz, Blake Cady, David Lowe, Willy Osborn, Werner Lohe, David Lescohier, Tom Nutt-Powell, David Pantalone,

Action Items for Next Meeting, (on 2nd Wednesday) May 13th, 6:00 – 7:30 pm, Town Hall, Room 408)

Tasks:

- Thomas Nutt-Powell – Contact Teen Center.
- Blake Cady – Explore availability and interest, Dexter School Rink.
- Willy Osborne, David Lescohier – Continue to identify commercial realtors, and explore sites on the 128 corridor.
- Werner Lohe – Investigate Stop and Shop Supermarket as possible site.

Mission Statement:

Werner Lohe offered a draft mission statement. After comments, the following represents a consensus:

The mission of the Community Shared Solar Working Group is to develop a project that will permit Brookline residents and businesses to own an off-site solar photovoltaic facility. This will enable those who cannot install solar on their property to invest in a new solar PV installation in Brookline, or, if necessary, in a nearby community. The project will be community-based in the sense that to the greatest extent possible, the financial benefits will accrue to the participants and the community.

Mission Statement was adopted.

Reports:

Thomas Nutt-Powell – Contact Brookline Housing Authority about using Housing Authority roofs to host solar PV plant.

Thomas Nutt-Powell met with housing authority. Mr. Nutt-Powell set up the meeting with the intent of discussing the Drummer Street site. He found that the Housing Authority would like to

evaluate and consider the potential at all of its properties. Mr. Nutt-Powell offered to work with the Authority to carry out an evaluation and identify financing for any feasible solar PV retrofits. This CSS would be aimed to lead to financial benefit for Housing Authority residents.

Blake Cady – Explore availability and interest, Allendale Farm.

Blake Cady made contact with Allendale farm and found that there does not seem to be an opportunity with the farm property.

Willy Osborne, David Lescohier –Identify commercial realtors, Newton Needham Chamber of Commerce to explore sites on the 128 corridor.

David Lescohier has been in touch with Paul Brickman. He sent an information package to Mr. Brickman. (A copy of this package was distributed at the meeting and is attached to the minutes.) The next step is a follow up contact.

David and Willy met with Andrew Bernstein of Kearsage Energy. Kearsage Energy has sites in the pipeline. If the Brookline group were to pursue a PPA type of approach, then we could team up with Kearsage. The benefit would be about 10% reduction in electric bills. The financing and structure would be the usual and customary use of large scale investors.

David and Willy met with Sandra Brown at Blue Wave Capital, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council selected solar PV developer vendor for the 17 MAPC member communities. (Willy knows the owner of Blue Wave and was able to arrange our meeting.) The aim was to learn more about the transfer station project which is the subject of warrant articles 15 & 16 at Spring Town Meeting.

Blue Wave has evaluated numerous town properties and has a list of approximately a dozen sites that may have solar PV potential; the transfer station is the largest at 1.4 MW DC. Singletree is next at less than ¼ this potential capacity.

The installation at the Transfer Station will be ground mounted canopies that would be high enough to shelter DPW equipment and supplies. The array would have 4,100 panels rated at 350 watts oriented at 222° producing an estimated 1.075 MW AC into the grid, earning a percentage of the value of this power for the Town.

Willy and David were hoping to find a way to join our community-based CSS interest to the Transfer Station project since it is by far the largest available potential site for solar PV in Brookline. There is not likely any possibility that there will ever be a solar PV project of this magnitude ever again in Brookline. Brookline is so built up and land is scarce and extremely valuable.

Willy and David thought about even adding language to the Warrant Article to see if there was a way to extend the project and share the benefits by enabling Brookline residents to invest capital and obtain an ownership stake through a co-op model. At a meeting with Melissa Goff, Deputy Town Administrator, we learned that the project, at its advanced stage cannot accommodate this kind of concept for several reasons. One is that the Transfer Station is part of a broader package including the dozen other possible sites. Another is that the financing is part of the terms of the agreement with Blue Wave. Any alteration would lead to a delay and possible failure to proceed.

We should support this project as currently structured and ensure that it reaches completion as soon as possible.

Celinda Shannon – Investigate Brookline Medical Marijuana growing facility in Franklin, Mass. as possible site.

The Franklin site is outside the NEMA load zone and therefore not suitable. In addition, NGRID load zone, serving an area with more abundant land has reached the net metering cap.

Werner Lohe – Continue to investigate 5 Washington Street as possible site.

Werner will continue to investigate.

Other reports

Homewood Suites – David Lowe made inquiries and heard that there was doubt about the potential in view of the design of the structure – too many roof features such as skylights.

Kehillath Israel – no report.

Brookline Teen Center – Thomas Nutt-Powel is still trying to make contact.

Putterham Golf Course – no report, observed that any project at the golf course would employ town owned land model and become a PPA offsetting town electric bill.

Dexter School – Blake Cady will investigate.

Devotion School – Building committee and architects recently had meeting about building energy efficiency. The building is expected to be solar ready and the outcome would likely be development similar to the Transfer Station. This is several years down the road, however.

Center Street Lot – Town is seeking funding for a consultant to study the upgrade of the Centre Street Lot and a solar PV canopy is a possible feature of any future plan for the lot.

Chestnut Hill Mall – lots of parking lots. How to investigate?

Stop and Shop Supermarket – Werner Lowe will investigate.

David Lowe announced that the roof – offtaker matching company that he is working for that has adopted Brookline as an initial target for their service is now known as Yeloha as a brand of Generaytor. Yeloha intends to use social media to recruit owners of roof that can host solar PV and match these with customers who finance the panels and reap a financial net metering benefit.

- David Lescohier

The next meeting will be on 2nd Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 6:00 – 7:30 PM in Town Hall, room 408. Group will review tasks identified under “Action Steps”.