

Minutes for October 8, 2014 meeting

1. Accepted September minutes as written.
2. Agreed to invite Rebecca Morris as an Associate Member and to ask her to become the committee's representative on the Master Plan Update Committee with a full vote.
3. Use "BoxGoSolar" as catchy, short name for our solar initiative.
4. Selected the logo from two designs. We will use this for BoxGoSolar and for the committee's overall work. And will request from Jonathan a variety of colors, using yellow for the sun.
5. BoxGoSolar Implementation Plan:

** Richard gave us notebooks that include our initial plan draft, Solarize Mass programs and reports for years 2011-2014, summaries of neighboring towns that successfully implemented solar programs, and Jim Elkind's presentation to our committee in December 2013.

** We asked Vince about the BoS response to our request for support. The BoS supports our effort to bring solar to the town. It won't agree to funding. It will review how many hours, or how much time, we request from staff members, in particular the need to have Dave Lindberg as our designated Municipal Representative. The plan would be: as Building Inspector he will work alongside us to review proposals, help select a solar vendor, and inspect residences and business to approve roofs for solar panels.

6. Sharon Brownfield, solar co-chair with Arnie Epstein from Stow, shared their success story. 50 houses were approved, with 5 tiers, aggregating to 400 watts, with an average of 7 watts per household. 5 watts is the usual number for a house. They sized the system based on one year's electrical bill.

Sharon went through the steps they took. The best way to review that information is to look at the notebook section on Stow. Some of the basics she mentioned are as follows: Solarize Mass sent out their RFP to all potential solar installers; they received between 20-30 proposals which they pared down to two, Astro Solar and NE Clean Energy. They chose NECE. They started the challenge in the fall and ended in May. They debriefed with Concord periodically.

Financing takes place in two ways: take a loan out or buy solar panels outright. No leasing.

Success was based on three major areas: 1. Created a "fabulous" volunteer group. 2. Partnered with the town manager and selectmen. 3. Got free publicity in newspapers.

They made 2 videos (walked through a house to show panels; did a time-lapsed installation) that went directly to UTube and their website. They had a series of activities: 3 forums; 6 open houses; 2 "tabling" events; 4 coffees; 26 e-newsletters; 40 solar signs; 3 videos; poster contest at school; Facebook; Stow TV rebroadcast forums. One sign showed the number of households joining in as the months progressed.

Hudson Electric Light gave \$5000 awards if a household could meet 3 stringent criteria. Only a few met those conditions. Hudson Light charges a base of \$2.70/month with a rate of .9 cents per kilowatt hour. This is comparable to LELD, if not less.

(My note: we need to verify Hudson's rate and learn how Stow made the investment in solar appealing financially to residents.)

Next meeting: November 12, Wednesday, 2014

Submitted by Francie Nolde, Chair