

Peterborough Energy Committee Minutes

August 11, 2021

Present: Emily Manns, Dori Drachman, Bruce Tucker, Joel Huberman, Anne Huberman, Steve Walker, Bill Kennedy, Bryan Field, Dan Weeks

ConVal Solar

We started with a reference to this “hot off the press” [announcement](#) about the ConVal solar project.

Dan Weeks of ReVision joined us to answer our questions about the ConVal Solar project. He told us that ConVal has now made a public commitment to go forward with the project. Superintendent Kimberly Rizzo Saunders got School Board reapproval for it last week. ReVision will install it this fall.

Dan thanked our whole committee for our work on this project and noted that we’ve all been working on it for about four years. It’s heartening to see it come to fruition.

We might be able to help with the ribbon-cutting event, but we should let the administration advise us on what they would like to do. The final commissioning will probably occur in December.

The library solar panels may deserve some sort of recognition apart from the grand opening of the library. We might consider combining that with some other clean energy celebrations.

When we asked Dan why the size of the solar array in the ConVal agreement is only 247 kW when we had recommended a 300 kW array, he explained that when the structural engineer examined the roof, she found that one section had less than the required capacity. Code requirements had increased since the roof was built, and new projects have to meet the current codes. There is a lot more room on the roof for solar panels, but the roof membrane in these areas is old and will have to be replaced soon. Once the membrane is replaced, more panels could be added.

Dan intends to supply a solar production dashboard to be displayed in the school, and he will reach out to the faculty to provide more educational opportunities for the students.

Dan told us that the EV charging unit they offered to ConVal could be installed on a building wall, not in the big parking lot. We got the idea that the [Applied Technology Center](#) at ConVal might be a good place for it. We’ll investigate that possibility.

Solar Tax Exemption

Discussion shifted to the fact that Peterborough does not have a law assuring that installing solar panels at a property will not increase its tax assessment. Even though this is the practice

in Peterborough, the lack of a law is a barrier to some people. [Nashua's law](#) could be an example for us. A majority of New Hampshire towns have such ordinances, and it is a widely accepted best practice. These laws have usually been brought forward as town meeting resolutions. We could make that a PEC project for the next town meeting. In some states there are state laws to this effect -- but not in New Hampshire.

Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC)

The MPSC will be meeting with Peterborough members of the School Board on Monday at 6:30 in the Select Board room. Anyone may attend.

EV Charging

Seth MacLean emailed us a brief report saying that all contracts are in place, and our end of Sept. / early Oct. timeframe for installation still holds, as far as he knows right now.

Legislation to Eliminate EV Demand Charges

We discussed the problems that Eversource's demand charges pose for EV charging in New Hampshire. We plan to propose some legislation to improve the situation and may meet with an Eversource representative and with our state representatives and senator to discuss it. We may also submit an article to a publication of the [New Hampshire Municipal Association](#) describing the situation and emphasizing the need for legislation. We see the demand charges as a problem of equity. They disproportionately penalize small businesses and people who don't own their own homes.

Electric School Buses

We are researching the electric school bus situation and will discuss this further in a future meeting.

Police EVs

We will try to arrange a September date for us to look at Peterborough's police vehicles.

Next Meeting

We cancelled our next regularly scheduled August 25 meeting because Emily will be away. Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 8, at 4:30 PM by Zoom.