

Meeting Minutes

Date: September 13, 2011

Location: Nashua River Watershed Association

Time: 7:30 PM

Attendees:

Commissioners: Mike Roberts, Chris Christie, Lisa Wieser, Carl Canner, Carl Flowers, Leo Laverdure

Guest: Terri Ragot, Susan Day Daniel

Minutes taken by: Stephanie Strickland

Agenda:

1. **Community Solar Arrays**
2. **Kick off for the development of a Town Sustainability Plan**
3. **Web Site**
4. **Adjourn**

Agenda Item #1: Community Solar Arrays

Discussion:

- Leo: This was a topic brought up by Scott Martin. He's into sustainable energy and he invited Chris and I over to look at a program in renewable energy called community solar power. It helps get around limitation in incentives programs. It includes the idea of having a community array but different in that it is owned individually. It can be put in a field with nothing obstructing it. What would be the arrangement with Groton local light?
- Terri: Groton's rate is so low that why would it be attractive to them?
- Chris: There are a multitude of plans. It depends on who can benefit from the different schemes. We're currently looking at a couple different methods. One of the plans is an agreement for so many mega watts. Money is coming from everyone and Groton has very competitive rates. You can also buy your own P.V. which is something we have been looking at. For the future it looks like solar P.V. will become competitive. There are many different programs available.
- Carl C: The town of Hudson has a municipal and they put in a solar power system.
- Chris: Yes and Groton could have a solar power system as well.
- Terri: I would like to see Groton interested in solar power for the future.
- Chris: We have been looking at proposals. One is Steve Webbers, on his land. Most people's biggest concern in keeping the rates reasonable. We are reluctant to get into generation. GELD spent extra money cutting down dead trees and one's that were hanging so we have pretty reliable electricity.
- Susan: I would imagine Groton will need to eventually invest in other types of power.
- Chris: The best bang for the buck is conservation.

- Susan: I used to work in the power industry and solar energy seems viable and reasonable.
- Terri: Start up costs are significant.
- Susan: Now days there are so many examples of solar energy working.
- Chris: If you wanted to put your own solar P.V. up it would be very hard to stay off the grid.
- Carl F: An engineer came by and asked if I would be interested in putting solar panels on 25 acres of my land. Two weeks later he said they wouldn't be able to do it because they would have to tie into National Grid in Groton. Umass was developing a program where the solar panels were 12ft off the ground. I don't get my electricity from GELD but my land is in Groton.
- Mike: If a delegate from this committee went to GELD what would need to be changed to get this to work on Carl's land?
- Carl C: I would like to talk about a matter that relates to what we've been talking about. If you've read the papers there is talk about ripping down the dams in West Groton. (Passes out report on the West Groton Hydro Site). The annual yield is the important part to look at on page three. There is a huge difference in what we're saying the cost might be. It was estimated 45,000 dollars for this hydro plant. The manager wasn't honest about many of the figures. There was a 90,000 dollar grant from the state to repair the dam but since it would save 5,000 dollars a year if it was torn down, some people want it removed.
- Mike: Would you like the commission to generate a letter in support of not tearing down the dam?
- Carl C: I think it would be helpful for the commission to write a letter to give to the selectmen.
- Lisa: Commission could provide a more in depth report, instead of just a letter.
- Mike: I would like to see a letter first saying more documentation will be provided later.
- Leo: Why do we need a letter?
- Terri: To give to the selectmen to maintain, instead of tear down, the dam.
- Leo: Then more than a letter we should show up and support our idea.
- Carl C: I think opinion will be important on this issue.
- Leo: Who is drafting an article?
- Carl C: The selectmen are discussing it, so I'm assuming they are. If I had my way I would want the dam to be let out again.
- Lisa: I think that if we were to really look at generating power and the true cost, we can't afford to not get involved with renewable resources. Personally I am willing to pay a little more for a clean conscious. My biggest thing is internalization of cost and I would pay extra now instead of cheap energy now and no energy later.
- Leo: What can the commission do?
- Lisa: Look at the source of our energy and we as a commission can look at which options are the best.
- Mike to Chris: Does the electric company know where all it's power is coming from?

- Chris: Of course it does.
- Mike: So why don't you give us a list of where all the power comes from? What we need to do is to educate. (Hands out Groton Master Plan Appendix.
- Terri: On this table of contents energy is listed.

Motion

- **Carl C: I make a motion that the Groton Sustainability Commission supports a town meeting article to repair the West Groton Dam.**
- **Lisa: I second**
- **Unanimous agreement**

Agenda Item #2: Kick off for the development of a Town Sustainability Plan

Discussion:

- Mike: My goal was to go through the natural resources and see how they fell out with respect to the three legged stool.
- Leo: Is the comprehensive Master Plan final now?
- Mike: Not yet.
- Susan: Would you like each of us to focus on a specific issue?
- Mike: I would like everyone to look at each of them in respect to the three legged stool and we can discuss them at the next meeting.
- Leo: So should we review the entire document?
- Mike: No, just look at the natural resources. Many of the things we're concerned about are not being looked at.
- Susan: I was more concerned with goals and recommendations.
- Mike: Maybe I should have looked at that more. What I would like to do is to take each chapter and see how the sustainability component fits.
- Leo: Groton local had a barbeque for new board members and they voted to support a new effort related to sustainable farming. A key part of New Entry Sustainable Farming Project is out of Lowell and what they did is looked at the emergent Groton Master Plan and said they could help achieve goals. They asked for our support in their matching program where they match people who have land with people who need it. (Gives out handout of their brochure). Will the commission sign a letter of support? The purpose of the letter is to agree to attend an informational meeting at the Groton Grange in November.

Action Item

- **Leo: I will draft a letter and look to Mike to sign it.**

Agenda Item #3: Web Site

Discussion:

- Mike: How many of the commissioners have looked at our web page recently?
- Lisa: I didn't even know we had one.

- Leo: Not in quite a while.
- Mike: I think we all need to start using it and everyone should take time to look through it. It has valuable resources that we should be taking advantage of.