

TOWN OF HARVARD
ENERGY POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE
February 12, 2020 - 7:00 to 8:00 PM
Volunteer Meeting Room, Upper Level
Harvard Town Hall
13 Ayer Road, Harvard, MA 01451

MINUTES

In Attendance: David Fay, Paul Green

Absent: Suzanne Johnston

Paul called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

After a brief discussion, and based on an email consultation with Suzanne, we established Tuesday evening as the regular meeting night for this committee. We suggested 8pm as the starting time, but later changed this to 7pm to better accommodate all members.

Paul agreed to serve as the chair for the meetings.

Under our charter from the Energy Advisory Committee, this committee can have up to 2 more community members. We need to think of people that we can approach and recruit.

David described the work of the HEET group in Cambridge, which is working on topics such as improved insulation, energy audits, and gas leaks. They have recently started looking into district heating, under which a company would provide heating services to a group of buildings. The hope is that an existing natural gas distribution company, with its expertise in underground infrastructure, might see a market opportunity supplying heat via constant temperature water.

Paul wondered what powers our Town Meeting or an elected or appointed board might have with respect to mandating conversion from fossil fuels to carbon-free or carbon-neutral energy systems. For example, can we require people to install a net zero heating system as a condition of passing title on their home? Can we require this of new construction? He had asked Lucy Wallace these questions, who suggested that he forward the request to Alice von Loesecke, current chair of the Select Board. The letter, and Lucy's response, is attached.

David suggested that we look at the report issued by the Municipal Vulnerability Project, as they made suggestions regarding climate adaptation.

Paul adjourned the meeting at 7:58 pm.

To: Lucy Wallace
CC: David Fay, Brian Smith
From: Paul Green
Date: March 31, 2020 at 5:23 PM
Subject: Energy Policy Question

Hi Lucy,

As chairman of the Energy Policy Subcommittee of the Harvard Energy Advisory Committee, our committee recently voted to ask the Board of Selectmen the following questions. Any advice you can share with us on these issues will be greatly appreciated.

1. What powers does the Town of Harvard possess, up to and including articles approved by via Town Meeting, to compel residents to take measures designed to (a) increase energy efficiency, (b) reduce greenhouse gas emissions, or (c) undertake similar activities whose ultimate purpose is to reduce the greenhouse gas contribution of residents of Harvard?

2. If we do not have compulsory powers via Town Meeting, would such powers be available via a home rule petition to the Massachusetts legislature?

As a specific example, could Harvard create a mechanism similar to the Title 5 process for sanitary treatment systems, such that the Town can require homeowners to upgrade their insulation, install energy-efficient lights, install a net-zero heating system, or make similar "green" improvements, prior to selling their home?

Thank you for your consideration.

Paul Green
Chair
Energy Policy Subcommittee of the HEAC

To: Paul Green
CC: David Fay, Brian Smith
From: Lucy Wallace
Date: April 2, 2020 at 11:07 AM
Subject: Re: Energy Policy Question

Paul,

I'm sorry to have been slow in getting back to you, but have been overwhelmed with parsing the CARE Act and its applicability to non-profits. I think the best way forward is to speak to Alice about having this on an agenda, provide written info in support of your proposal and see when it might be brought before the entire SB.

Be well and stay safe!

Lucy