

Community Shared Solar Brookline Working Group

Minutes

07/08/2015, 6:00 pm, room 310, Town Hall

Jenny Fariborz, David Lowe, Jack Spence, David Klafter, Dave Pantalone, Ernie Frey, David Lescohier, John Harris, Elissa Yanover, Grady McGonagill

Action Items for Next Meeting, (on 2nd Wednesday September 9th, 6:00 – 7:30 pm, Town Hall, Room 310.)

Tasks:

- Consider proposed action, launching a Community Shared Solar Campaign for Brookline in collaboration with Village Power relying on a solar PV site developed by a Village Power partner.

Updates

No updates this month.

Other discussion

The July meeting was devoted to a discussion about ‘What’s Next?’

Village Power website: Jenny Fariborz was particularly concerned about security, privacy, and ownership of the information gathered, assuming we adopt the Village power website as a platform for our campaign. Jenny learned that Village Power outsources the storage to a cloud-based company that maintains a high degree of security since the safety and security of their system is their sole focus. Any information we collect remains our property in the sense that this information will be transferred to us in an electronic form, should we request this. She also has been in touch with Susan Martin of Climate Action Brookline about possibly establishing a page on the new CAB website for the use of the Community Shared Solar Working Group. The idea is to use the CAB web page as a more internal facing way to coordinate and share within the active CSS group. The Village Power website would be the public-facing platform for conducting the campaign, identifying interested participants, subscribers, or off takers; providing information about the Brookline CSS program and each project we undertake.

David Lescohier reported on two possible sites. There was a possible roof top site in Somerville sufficient for 900 KW, but the owner decided to develop it for their own purposes rather than make it available. A second site is in Hyde Park industrial area. A condominium in one of the buildings is in the last stages of planning to build solar on their building. There are multiple other buildings and a large parking area. Michael Merrill negotiated for the condo and is making inquiries with the owner of the complex about a CSS project at this site.

David Lescohier has been in touch with Massachusetts Climate Action Network about reaching out to other MCAN members that may also be exploring CSS projects for the purpose of exchanging information and networking. (Climate Action Brookline is a member. This is our connection.)

The group discussed our next steps. There were several themes. We need to keep it simple and be humble about our aims. Since we are working against a deadline of 2016 when the current tax credit legislation expires, we are not in a position to continue to talk about CSS. We should decide on a strategy and commence execution now for the fall. Since getting a project off the ground takes a considerable amount of time, we have essentially run out of time to find a site on our own. At the same time, Village Power has NEMA located sites in its pipeline that may be suitable for our aim to commence a 500 KW CSS seeking for 50 – 75 off takers. If we take this route, then we should shift our focus to recruiting off takers, subscribers, participants. We agreed to make initial steps in this regard which would lead to a non-binding agreement with Village Power to use their resources as a vehicle to create an initial CSS project in Brookline.

- David Lescohier

The next meeting will be on 2nd Wednesday, September 9th, 2015 at 6:00 – 7:30 PM in Town Hall, room 310. Group will review tasks identified under “Action Steps”.