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ACTON

**GREEN ADVISORY BOARD  
JUNE 23, 2014  
MINUTES**

**ACTON MEMORIAL LIBRARY - 486 MAIN STREET  
CONFERENCE ROOM  
6:30 PM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dennis Loria, Eric Hudson, Mary Smith  
**ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:** Renato Nakagomi, Padamaja Kuchimanchi  
**MUNICIPAL PROPERTIES DIRECTOR:** Dean Charter  
**ENERGY CONSERVATION ANALYST:** Pamela Cady  
**GREEN ADVISOR TO THE SCHOOLS:** Kate Crosby  
**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Andrea Ristine  
**VISITORS:** JD Head

6:36 Acting Chairman, Mr. Hudson called the meeting to order.

Appoint New Chairman & Vice Chair

Ms. Smith suggested tabling discussions and the vote until the meeting of July 14.

New Liaison to the Green Advisory Board - Selectman Peter Berry

Mr. Berry introduced himself with a brief background to the Board.

Energy Aggregation

Mr. Berry noted that he is interested in the program.

Mr. Charter reported that he has done some investigation of the program noting that an annual town meeting (ATM) would have to vote to approve the program. If approved, all residents and businesses would automatically, by default, be included unless they specifically opt out.

Ms. Cady noted that an energy aggregation program does not guarantee to save money, but does provide price stability, and a choice between renewable and/or green energy.

Ms. Smith stated that energy aggregation is interesting and a good idea for individuals but may not be as good for the Town as the price of energy will be getting higher for the next four to five years. Currently there aren't any deals for the Town; it would take a lot of time and energy and might not be worth it.

Upon query by Mr. Loria, Mr. Charter stated the delivery charges to NStar for electricity would still be applied and the energy would be supplied through another vendor. Mr. Loria thinks the Town's net metering agreement for the landfill solar array is eligible for an entire credit including delivery charges; he will investigate the issue.

Upon query by Mr. Berry, Mr. Charter reported that, if approved/accepted at town meeting, the entire town would be aggregated to one energy supplier, residential and businesses, and would appreciate a recommendation from GAB on this matter.

#### Landfill Solar Facility Lease

Net Receipts to Town of Acton Energy Efficiency Fund - House No. 4106 filed 5/7/2012 (040)

Mr. Charter reaffirmed that an Energy Efficiency Fund (EEF) was approved by the State and Town for which he is seeking ways to get funds deposited into it. The Board of Selectmen (BoS) agreed that the solar landfill lease payment revenue is appropriate to deposit into the EEF to allow for energy efficient projects. The BoS can also appropriate funds from the Town's budget, deposits from grants and gifts. Mr. Charter would like to allow the EEF to accumulate for a couple years in order to be able to do significant Town projects. This would help offset some expenses and would still be required to go through the budgeting process. Pelle Verde has been billed for their first lease payment.

Upon query by Ms. Crosby, Mr. Charter reported that the law, as written, specifically states that the EEF is "...to provide funds for energy savings in town-owned facilities or on town-owned property..." The Town has projects that the money can be used for. This was a Home Rule Petition approved at Annual Town Meeting, the State Legislature and the Governor. He can speak to the law that was passed not as "interpreted"; the Schools had the ability to do the same with their solar facilities.

Mr. Head stated that the Schools have a revenue stream based on their energy savings and are not giving any to the town.

Mr. Berry stated that the law could be changed but not currently by the way it is written.

Mr. Loria stated that he would like to see the Town have flexibility towards the best investment of the money.

Mr. Head stated that he would like to have reasonable thought into how the funds are spent and would like to buy some of the landfill's solar power, if possible. Only consumption can be controlled. Beyond the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) he would prefer 'clean' power and create multiple use benefit for regional school property.

Ms. Smith moved that the Board hold further discussions at their September meeting regarding the Home Rule Petition pertaining to the EEF, Mr. Loria 2<sup>nd</sup>; unanimous.

#### Net Meter Credit Schedule Z Allocations

Mr. Charter reported that the current allocations under the Schedule Z will need to be adjusted [PV% sheet distributed (*included within Extra Information folder for the 6-23-2014 agenda* <http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-6422>). The initial allocation distribution was set up attempting to cover 85% of Town buildings and the remainder was been put towards the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP). As initially set up, currently the Town is using less than 100% of the solar production during the summer months; now it is known that the Town can allocate more towards the WWTP. AMERESCO had recommended allocating 85% to help prevent stranded credits.

Mr. Charter will work with town counsel and Mr. Loria will contact DOER for recommendations.

Mr. Charter stated that it won't make a huge financial impact but he wants to get allocations as close as possible to consumption.

Upon query by Mr. Hudson regarding potential stranded net meter credits due to over allocation, Mr. Charter reported that the annual \$65,000 lease payment is strictly revenue from the land lease owed to the Town from Pelle Verde (PV), it is not related to the net meter credits, production or consumption. The Town still pays PV for the energy generated and allocated to the chosen NStar meter accounts but PV leases the land from the Town. He believes that the credits are lost after a 12 month period; it is a financial concern but not a panic situation yet since we have not seen winter months' production from the solar facility, which will be lower than summer production.

Upon query by Mr. Head, Mr. Charter noted that the Town cannot reconcile the credits as of yet since we don't have 12 months of data from when the facility came on line. Bottom line, the WWTP will have more allocated towards it; the Town can easily consume all solar energy production if more is applied towards the WWTP.

#### Potential 2015 Meeting Date Schedule (050)

Mr. Hudson moved that the Board accept the schedule of meeting on the first Monday of the month, Ms. Smith 2<sup>nd</sup>; unanimous.

#### Recent Energy Conservation Measures (070)

Mr. Charter reaffirmed that the street lights along Great Road have converted to LEDs. The HVAC system controls for the Public Safety Facility (PSF), Emergency Operations Center/training room have been upgraded with an occupancy sensor; now it conditions the air when needed for three hours unless reset, whereas the HVAC used to run 24/7 in that part of the PSF.

Mr. Head noted that it is good that this recent upgrade is done but he feels that it should have been done sooner.

#### Previous Town Report - Questions 2009 - 2013 (090 - 094)

Mr. Head apologized for being opinionated and expressed interest in the spirit of the GAB and accountability, living the commitment made as a green community.

He stated that he feels that the Town has spent money on capital projects without results; the schools have spent money on capital projects through his operation budget and through savings. The point of the projects is to reduce consumption. He feels that the citizens of Acton are uninformed through the annual town reports. He feels that the Town has increased consumptions, municipal buildings are up 6.8% and the schools are down 19%. This year the schools will be higher in natural gas. The first four years as a Green Community the Town plus the Schools were down 14%, numbers will go in the wrong direction this year and Acton's Green Community annual report won't look good at the end of the year. Acton, as a Green Community, has gone from 75% to 69% carbon foot print. Fairness should be about consumption not the percentage of the grant allocation; individual projects need to be looked at.

Mr. Hudson stated that he didn't feel that the percentage of the grant application between the Town and Schools was off comparing the percent of the tax breakdown. The Board recommended the Town's best potential project. The accuracy of submissions and the process of reviewing grant projects should have started sooner. He agreed that there could have been some adjustments but the time frame to review and vote prior to the grant submittal deadline did not allow for review or setting another meeting.

Mr. Head agreed that there should have been more time to allow the review of the grant application information. He felt that the mission of this group isn't controlling fairness of

allocation of the grant but to reduce the communities' carbon footprint; the reality of DOER reports of achieving energy consumption reductions and footprint. Acton may not get another opportunity for grant funding. Outside of the operating budget the Schools only have grant opportunities.

Ms. Smith stated that she is impressed with the projects the schools have done; there is an issue with the Schools' regionalization no longer being part of the "Town" which is a discussion beyond the Board. She feels that the Schools should be included in the work that the Board does; a premise needs to be worked on as the schools are important.

Mr. Loria stated that there is no algorithm that works every time, the project payback with the most benefit with a certain investment needs to be looked at; when there is spread on the payback he would choose the greatest payback.

Mr. Hudson noted that a project could be high profile but with less benefit percentage.

Mr. Charter noted that in reviewing the initial numbers submitted for 2009 for the Green Communities designation he is reasonably convinced that the numbers are incorrect; he can't figure out where the numbers were derived from so there were initial filing issues that have dogged the process. On the Town side, Mr. Charter reported that he has been involved with building maintenance, upgrades and construction for 30 years. Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs) have been done every year in Town buildings sometimes through the operating budget some were through ATM warrant articles. An arbitrary amount set by State legislation is a tough challenge and feels that the numbers will look better come this November. The Green Advisory Board's budget is from the Town's operating budget and not an outside source of funds. The Acton Leadership Group (ALG) decides on the operating and capital operating allocations. The HVAC upgrade for the Town Hall is in the Town's overall allocation of money. Through the first grant process, \$25,000 went towards Ms. Crosby's salary.

Mr. Head reported at one time he suggested a shared energy conservation analyst position to which John Murray disagreed to. As a group, advocating for the right thing is his priority, going for the best payback. Some education opportunities should play a role. As a citizen would like to see GAB strictly advise carbon footprint reduction.

Mr. Hudson noted that as a volunteer organization, reviewing documents submitted by employees can be a challenging situation; GAB has been challenged over the past three years in getting the experts that can scrutinize projects; GAB needs members. It is also a challenging period to understand the regionalization and the facts and what GAB can do for the regional school district. He feels that GAB should have more participation from a school representative.

Mr. Head provided a handout which was a page 2 from the Memorandum of Understanding between the Regional School District and the Town of Acton (*included within Extra Information folder for the 6-23-2014 agenda <http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-6422/Document-47517>*). The School Committee (SC) members advocated for removing Ms. Crosby's position because the SC wants the budget reduced by any amount increased somewhere else.

Upon query by Mr. Hudson, Ms. Crosby stated that she feels that the municipal (Town) side would consume the GAB, she wants consideration to made based on merits and needs GAB's support.

Ms. Smith noted that the bigger issue is that the Town is constrained in light of the regionalization and needs advice on this matter.

Mr. Head stated the broader point is global citizenship of Green Communities is to help the State collectively work on carbon footprint; fundamentally it is working.

Ms. Smith specified this is for 'communities' not regional schools.

Mr. Hudson stated that the Board hears the school's voice which will be considered but more participation is wanted.

8:08 Creation of Sub-Committee - Attracting New Members - tabled until the July meeting.

Green Advisory Board Budget - (100 - 103)

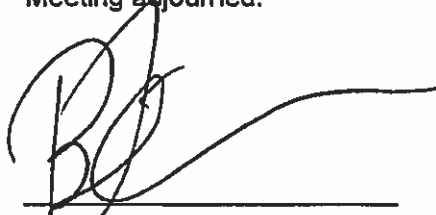
Mr. Charter reported that Mr. Head had raised question regarding budget reports; reports from fiscal years 2011 through 2014 and grant closing reports have been posted in DocuShare.

Green Communities Grant Budget - Closing Reports (200 - 201)

Green Communities Grant Award - Fiscal Year 2015

Mr. Charter stated that he hopes to hear from DOER by June 30.

8:11 Meeting adjourned.



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Bruce Friedman  
Vice Chairman

ahr.gab.minutes.2014.06-23-2014



**GREEN ADVISORY BOARD  
JUNE 23, 2014  
AGENDA**

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1. Appoint New Chairman & Vice Chair
2. Approve Minutes - May 12, 2014
3. New Liaison to the Green Advisory Board - Selectman Peter Berry
4. Landfill Solar Project Lease - Net Receipts to Town of Acton Energy Efficiency Fund - House No. 4106 filed 5/7/2012 (040)
5. Potential 2015 Meeting Date Schedule (050)
6. Energy Aggregation
7. Recent Energy Conservation Measures (070)
8. Creation of Sub-Committee - Attracting New Members
9. Previous Town Report - Questions 2009 - 2013 (090 - 094)
10. Green Advisory Board Budget - Fiscal Years 2012, 2013 and 2014 (100 - 103)
11. Closing Reports – Green Communities Grant Budget Reports (200 - 201)
12. Update on Award of Green Communities Grant Fiscal Year 2015

**Next meeting: July 14**