

Center Harbor Energy Committee March 18th, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Carol Sullivan, Bernie Volz, Michael Rich, Selectmen Representative Richard Drenkhahn, Guests: Katherine Thorndike and Wharton Sinclair, Sandwich Energy Committee

Carol called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Conversation with Sandwich Energy Committee Guests

Katherine Thorndike and Wharton Sinclair of the Sandwich Energy Committee reported that their Solar Array Bond needed a 3/5 vote (or 60%). The results were Yes (59%) and No (41%). Given this ratio, the town can meet again on March 30, to reconsider this article. Sandwich town residents did not approve of the solar project for various reasons including the fact that the array is not behind the meter, there is a longer payback period, they were concerned about toxic substances coming out of the array, etc.

Kathryn and Wharton stated that in their estimation, everything about the Center Harbor Solar Array project was done well. They expressed sympathy that the Warrant Article did not pass. The vote for the Center Harbor project was 33 Yes and 87 No. Center Harbor may consider trying to pass a Solar Array Warrant Article again next year if the Select Board is in favor. In Center Harbor, residents who were not in favor of the project objected to it for aesthetic reasons, felt that Inflation Reduction Act rebates were not reliable and thought that the impact of the project on resident taxes would go beyond one year. Other locations that have been considered include the Town Highway Department Garage and an old, land-filled dump on Keyser Road.

Kathryn and Wharton left the meeting at around 7:40 and the rest of the meeting was held.

On-Going Business

Review and approval of Minutes from Energy Committee Meeting:

Bernie moved to approve the minutes of the February 2024 Energy Committee meeting. Michael seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

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Carol Address to the Committee

Carol discussed her disappointment that two of three Select Board members voted against the Solar Project and did not inform the Energy Committee of their decision. Instead, the Committee had to search the Town Website to discover the Board majority had backed out of the project. She was grateful for Richard's support of the project. She conceded that the Select Board members had the right to vote as they saw fit, but after the Select Board had encouraged the Committee to take on this project and after spending 1.5 years working on the project and including the Select Board in every decision, it seemed disrespectful and unprofessional to not inform the Committee of their decision.

Next Steps for the Energy Committee

The Committee agreed to consider other locations for the Solar Array if the Select Board was interested in further pursuing a solar project. Such places might include the roof of one or both buildings at the Town Highway Garage, the old town dump (off Keyser Rd.), etc. Richard set up an appointment for the Committee to meet with the Select Board on Wednesday, March 27th at the weekly Select Board meeting.

New Business

There was no new business.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Richard moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm. Bernie seconded. Meeting was adjourned at that time.

There will be no meeting in April and the May meeting needs to be rescheduled due to committee members' travel - (watch the energy Committee's website).

Respectfully submitted, Carol Sullivan