



# Town of Barnstable Infrastructure and Energy Committee

## Meeting Minutes

**Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2024, at 5:00PM**

*This meeting of the Barnstable Infrastructure & Energy Committee is being recorded and will be posted for future viewing on the Town of Barnstable website. Under MGL Chapter 30A Section 20, anyone else desiring to make such a recording or transmission must notify the Chair.*

### *Remote Participation Instructions*

*The Infrastructure and Energy Committee's Public Hearing will be held by remote participation methods. Real-time public comment can be addressed to the Infrastructure & Energy Committee utilizing the Zoom link and access code for remote access below:*

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://townofbarnstable-us.zoom.us/j/81185779775?pwd=IWwpaqEVRQXL3rbEwApx5INmtAB6b.1>

Meeting ID: 811 8577 9775

Passcode: 568500

### **Infrastructure and Energy Committee Members present: (On Zoom)**

Barry Sheingold (Chair); Christopher Gloninger; John Solomon; Jane Ward; Rob Wilson

### **Infrastructure and Energy Committee Members absent:**

Kristin Terkelsen, Town Council

### **Others in Attendance: (On Zoom)**

Chris Gadd, Communications Assistant, DPW; Mark Wirtanen

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### **Agenda:**

#### **Call to Order**

Barry Sheingold, Chair, called the November 12, 2024 meeting of the Infrastructure and Energy Committee to order at 5:04 PM. The Meeting of the Infrastructure and Energy Committee was held remotely.

Barry notes a member of the public, Mark Wirtanen, had joined the meeting and invited Mark to introduce themselves and their reason for attendance.

Mark Wirtanen is from West Barnstable and is here to inquire about Commerce Road in Barnstable Village. The Town is working on a project in the area that, in addition to the previously designed work, should bury the powerlines in the applicable areas. This will increase safety and reliability and increase the quality of life as the poles “look terrible” and destroy the trees when the energy company needs to come in and prune the trees. The lines would be from the beginning of the project to Route 6a.

Barry asks if Mark is aware of what type of line this would affect.

Mark responds that it is the distribution lines going to the homes. As the project will be adding fill, all that is needed is to dig trenches. The project is putting in a sidewalk, so might as well bury the power lines well they’re at it.

Jane Ward asks if Mark had a chance to discuss this proposal with the DPW at the Town meeting for the project.

Mark responds that he did attend the meeting, but did not have a chance to bring it up.

Barry invited Mark to have a conversation with him offline and provided contact information.

#### **Approval of October 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Barry Sheingold, Chair, moves to discuss the October 7, 2024 meeting minutes. Hearing no requested edits, Chris Gloninger moves to approve the minutes. Jane Ward seconds the motion. The Committee unanimously approves the October 7, 2024 meeting minutes.

#### **Approval of October 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Barry Sheingold, Chair, moves to discuss the October 21, 2024 meeting minutes. Barry has one requested edit.

*Page 4-New Business-Additional Updates from Committee Chair* update first paragraph to read “Barry Sheingold, Chair, opens the discussion by reviewing the solar firm presentation he brought up at the last meeting. Barry got the sense that, regardless of the merits of the initiative, it was not something the committee wanted to focus on. Additionally, it is not within the purview of the committee to help a business sell their product. Jane Ward agrees, and notes concerns different groups having their own agendas. If the committee were to entertain the idea, it would require the full attention of the committee. John Solomon notes agreement with Jane. Rob Wilson notes that solar charging is an important issue but there is concern with the committee being able to do it part-time. Barry concludes that there are questions regarding the sizing of the business, and in the grand scheme Barnstable’s energy usage would be a fraction of the company’s usage. He recommends tabling the topic for further discussion until raised at a future meeting. Kristin Terkelsen also notes that the possible support or sanctioning of a business would likely need to go through the Town’s Legal department.”

Hearing no further requested edits, Barry moves to approve the minutes with the requested edit. John Solomon seconds. The Committee unanimously approves the October 21, 2024 minutes with the requested edit.

## Old Business

### a) Green Communities

Barry Sheingold, Chair, opens the discussion by noting that there have been no significant updates. The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) has no updates on any regulations, which are not expected until 2025.

Jane Ward notes concerns about the recent national election and whether the funding for Green Communities comes from federal or state funding. Barry responds that the funding comes from the state and the outcome of the national election should not impact the initiative.

### b) Food Waste

Barry Sheingold, Chair, opens the discussion by asking John Solomon for any updates. John Solomon reports that he has followed up with Kari Parcell, Waste Reduction Coordinator with the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension, about their effort to establish a food waste composting site on Joint Base Cape Cod (JBCC). Kari informed John that their consultant is close to completing a feasibility study on a seven-acre parcel at JBCC. They aim to discuss the next steps in January 2025.

John Solomon reports that he, Barry Sheingold, and Jane Ward had a meeting with Thomas McKean, Director of the Town of Barnstable Health Division, and Dianna Bellaire, Permit Technician for the Town of Barnstable Health Division, to discuss commercial food waste. The Health Division demonstrated an openness to working with the committee and provided the members present with a list of food establishments in town. The Health Division also provided information on sending a bulk email to these establishments but cautioned that there is uncertainty about the authority of the Health Division to enforce state regulations.

John inquires if the Committee wants to compose a message to send and look into who the message would come from. He notes that it may be worthwhile to wait until the food waste program is operating at JBCC, as it will be easier to direct business owners there.

Jane agrees with John that it is best to wait until JBCC has their food waste program operational and suggests that the Department of Public Works (DPW) be responsible for enforcing the regulation and crafting the letter. Barry notes it is not under the authority of the DPW. Jane questions who has the authority. Barry responds it is the authority of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) to enforce the regulation, which seems to be minimally enforced.

Jane expresses frustration at the passing of responsibility between different entities. She notes that food waste in landfills is a major generator of methane. Barry agrees and notes he is uncertain of where to begin, the conversation with the Health Division was to see who had the authority. Barry suggests reaching out to MassDEP to see what messages they are sending.

Jane notes that any letter should be solution-based. It is more worthwhile to send a letter that provides a solution than to just state an issue or enforce a regulation. John notes that he is aware of some companies in the area that pick-up food waste,

but there is a question of cost. He notes that, during their conversation with the Health Division, they were informed that the Health Division is responsible for private waste haulers in Town. With that, there is a recently established rule that these haulers are required to offer recycling services. John suggests an additional rule could be made that would limit picking up an excess amount of organic material. This would need a Town Council vote, but there is precedent as the Town Council approved the Recycling rule.

Barry suggests drafting a sentence or two that could be included in future Health Division messages to commercial properties with food. The message would be polite but indicate it is a legal requirement. John agrees to draft this and will run it by Barry.

John also notes it would be worthwhile to send information to the haulers about the efforts at JBCC, which would limit the distance haulers need to travel. Barry clarifies that it will likely be several years before the JBCC initiative is ready to accept food waste.

Rob Wilson notes that companies that handle food waste are more inclined when customers are grouped together. Jane noted that her church had discussions about food waste and the haulers indicated a grouping of 20-25 customers locally is the minimum, according to one hauler.

John provides an update on the Transfer Station survey initiative. He has reached out to Tracy Regazio, Supervisor of the Transfer Station and Recycling Division, inquiring about a survey initiative and the feasibility of setting up at the transfer station to collect the data. No response has been received; John will follow up with Tracy.

Barry noted that in past conversations the food waste initiative was part of a two-year grant for food waste and inquired if John or Chris Gadd knew about any effort to extend the grant as the two-year mark is approaching. John states that the program is a state-funded program that provides funds annually, getting credits for certain activities which are then used to fund the program. Barry notes it is important to know whether this program will be continued as it will affect the desire to survey.

c) Climate Change and Climate Science

Barry opens the discussion by asking Chris Gloninger for any updates. Chris shares data on the current drought affecting Massachusetts and notes it is the driest start to Fall on record. This is causing chaos with wildfires and will impact the spring as there is less opportunity to recharge groundwater. This trend is far from normal, citing the 12<sup>th</sup> red flag warning of the season. Droughts are draining resources and something to plan for the future.

Barry asks what we can attribute the drought to. Chris notes a clear climate signal, especially above normal temperatures that cause extra evaporation. Typically, we get 10 inches of rain, we have only gotten two inches this Fall. The pattern has been favorable for persistent high pressure since September.

Barry asks if there is any concern about the water supply. Chris responds that on Cape Cod the water tables are high enough, but inland Massachusetts is in the bottom 5% of where the water table would be.

Jane Ward notes a local issue at the Centerville River, which is a Herring run. Because of the low precipitation, herring cannot get out of the river to continue their migration. Jane notes that herring are at the bottom of the food chain. This drought is a good reason for Town Council to look into water conservation. Jane notes the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan Ad Hoc Committee that recently formed, and that water conservation should be a part of that conversation. Water and energy are linked and every town in the United States should be looking at water conservation.

Chris Gloninger notes that lower water levels also lead to lower water quality, in turn leading to algal blooms which are a health risk.

#### d) Air Quality Monitoring

Barry opens the discussion by asking Jane Ward to provide updates. Jane noted that the initial question asked of Lisa Sullivan from the Department of Energy Resources was whether funds from Green Community designation could be used for HVAC upgrades, which Lisa informed the committee that they could be, but not for the mold remediation. Jane notes she attended a School Committee meeting where many parents and teachers spoke up illnesses at the school. An air quality expert and state school inspector were present at the meeting and informed those present that “tape testing” had been conducted and showed no signs of mold and people cannot respiratory conditions from certain molds typically found on Cape Cod. Jane noted that the information is incorrect. From a public health management perspective, when a person has a respiratory attack there is an obvious issue, not everyone has the same sensitivity to allergens. Jane brought up the Boston Public Schools System, which utilizes an indoor air quality monitoring dashboard that is open to the public and reports on several data points. Jane later met with Sarah Ahern, Superintendent of Schools, and the Chief of Facilities to present information on the air quality monitoring system and how such a system is beneficial and assist in mold remediation. Jane has not heard anything further from the School Committee

Barry notes that, anecdotally, some rooms in the schools are okay while others are not.

Jane notes that air is invisible, and a monitoring system would capture multiple data points throughout a building, potentially finding something that isn't normally identified. On average, indoor school air quality across the nation is 2,500 parts per million (PPM). When outside, there is concern at 450 PPM and illnesses occur starting 600 PPM. Places that monitor air quality show increased productivity.

Barry questions if there is a stipulation in the contract from when the mold was immediately removed that the removal company had to continue testing, as that could be a possible barrier. Jane noted that, if the company were to be doing

testing, they are likely only doing “tape tests” which are inadequate to address the full situation.

Barry asks if there is anything else that can be done, noting that this is the responsibility of the School Committee and not the Town Council. Jane notes that Town Council does not micromanage the School Committee, so here is not much that can be done from that side.

Barry clarified that being designated a Green Community would result in the town getting approximately \$200,000 and that there are grants that can be applied to in addition to that. Jane notes there are lots of grants to apply for, especially since the COVID-19 Pandemic, but it seems until there is a change of heart in the School Committee not much will be done.

Jane notes that, in talking with colleagues from Sandwich, MA, the tipping point for them to achieve a Grene Community designation was the ability to use the funding for school HVAC upgrades.

## **New Business**

### a) Additional Updates from the Committee Chair

Barry provided updates on Town/Wind Projects:

#### New England Wind/Park City Wind

A petition under the Town charter was brought to attention at the October 7, 2024 Town Council Meeting. This petition asks the Town Council to reconsider their vote to approve a side letter with Park City Wind. This petition will be heard substantively at the next Town Council meeting, scheduled for Thursday November 21, 2024. Barry notes there has been legal action on the agreement, and that a decision will come at some point.

Park City Wind and COMM Water District have been negotiating to produce a Memorandum of Understanding. These negotiations have been mostly in public.

Jane asks what the involvement with COMM Water District is in relation to this project. Barry responds that the focus of concern is pipes from the Park City Wind project creating heat, which may heat water in the COMM Water District pipes, creating a public health issue. There is an ongoing engineering study to see what can be done to reduce the risk of heating water. Additionally, there is concern about the dielectric fluids from the substations and what could happen to the groundwater if those liquids were to be released and who would have jurisdiction over the area of release.

Jane asks if there has been any mention of the MIT Committee that Councilor Terkelsen had brought up at previous meetings. Barry indicates he has not heard anything about utilizing that committee for this project. Barry notes that the MIT committee may be working on the project, but he has not heard anything.

#### Commonwealth Wind

A Town Council vote was held regarding the Commonwealth Wind project landing at

Dowse's Beach. The Council voted to oppose the specific project. Most opponents to the vote wanted a broader stance, as the vote only addressed the project, not Wind Companies entirely.

Barry opened the floor for any further updates or discussion. Jane noted an online summit (Rich Earth Summit) that addresses other forms of sanitation across various groups, from households to large cities. She suggested this should be brought up to the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan Ad Hoc Committee.

Barry informs the committee that William Beal has resigned from the committee. This adds to the deficit of members on the committee. Barry asked everyone to think of people who would be interested in the committee and to invite them to join.

b) Discuss Future Meeting Dates

Barry suggests coming up with tentative dates for the next few meetings and addressing upcoming meetings that are close to holidays. Barry notes that it will be difficult for him to attend the November 25, 2024 Meeting as he will be traveling. Jane notes it will likely be low yield. Barry proposes not meeting on November 25, 2024. The committee agrees.

Jane proposes meeting only once in December, again due to the holidays. After some deliberation, it is decided that the December 9, 2024 meeting will remain along with the December 23, 2024 meeting. It will be decided at the December 9 meeting if there is a need to meet on December 23.

Barry asks all present to review the list of possible dates provided by Chris Gadd to try and get meetings through June 2025 on the calendar. These dates follow meetings on the second and fourth Monday of the month. The issues noted at the meeting are:

- Monday, February 24, 2025-Barry will be unable to attend
- Monday, March 10, 2025-Barry requests this to be moved to March 11 due to prior arrangements.
- Monday June 9 & Monday June 23, 2025-Due to various conflicts it is recommended to move this meeting to June 16<sup>th</sup>.

Chris Gadd will recirculate these dates. Anyone with noted conflicts should send them to Chris Gadd and Barry.

c) Discuss Agenda for Next Meeting, November 25, 2024

- a. As previously noted, this meeting is postponed until December 9, 2025.
- b. Barry notes that the committee has been without a Vice Chair since Peter Doyle's passing and requests adding an election to the agenda for the next meeting.

**Motion to Adjourn**

Jane Ward moves to adjourn the meeting. John Solomon seconds. The committee voted unanimously. The meeting is adjourned at 6:22 PM.

Next Meeting: December 9, 2024 at 5:00 PM

DRAFT Upcoming Agenda for December 9, 2024

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of November 12, 2024, Meeting Minutes
3. Election of Vice Chair
4. Old Business
  - a. Green Communities
    - i. Relevant Updates
  - b. Food Waste
    - i. Relevant Updates
  - c. Climate Change and Climate Science
    - i. Relevant Updates
  - d. Air Quality Monitoring
    - i. Relevant Updates
5. New Business
  - a. Additional updates from Committee Chair
  - b. Discuss agenda for next meeting, December 23, 2024
6. Motion to adjourn

**Respectfully submitted by Christopher Gadd, Communications Assistant, Barnstable Department of Public Works.**