

Windham Energy Committee Minutes

3/3/17

Present: Buddy Behrendt, Bill Dunkel, Michael Simonds, Cathy Stover, Ralph Meima (Green Lantern Group)

Ralph Meima, of Green Lantern Group, a Vermont based solar development company, attended the meeting in response to our invitation. The committee discussed solar development, in general, and the possibility of installing an array adjacent to the cemetery next to the town office.

Ralph feels that the field is the right size for a 125KW – 150 KW array, which should be able to connect to current phase one electric lines. The field appears to be too small for a large array of roughly 500 KW, which is the size that private investors are interested in owning. In addition, a 500 KW array would need access to phase three lines, which are a long way off at Timber Ridge.

Ralph outlined the following two options for a 125-150 KW array:

1) Community Solar model

Homeowners and local businesses could buy panels, own a share of the electricity generated and claim federal and state renewable energy tax credits. The town of Windham would not be an offtaker of the electricity that is produced, but it would get income from renting the land and from tax revenue. Green Lantern would have the responsibility for selling panels and maintaining and insuring the array.

2) A hybrid community solar/town solar model

Two thirds of the array would be community solar, as described above. The town would be a no-money-down offtaker of about a third of the electricity that is produced. The town rents the land to Green Lantern. They figure out how to finance the project; they insure and maintain it. Windham gets rental income, tax revenue and electricity at a rate less than we currently pay to GMP. This, presumably, would involve signing a long term power purchase agreement with Green Lantern.

Under either scenario, there would be appropriate fencing and aesthetic screening of the array. This is something they routinely do for all of their projects.

At the committee's request, Green Lantern will develop a proposal covering the two scenarios noted above. Of course, the town is under no obligation to proceed

after receiving the proposal. If the Select Board eventually wishes to proceed, the Board or the Planning Commission will have to either amend the Town Plan or issue a letter designating the field in question as a “preferred location” for a solar array. This would be necessary because apparently the PBS currently is issuing Certificates of Public Good primarily for brownfield locations.

Relatedly, Ralph reported that Green Lantern does have an agreement with Sean Reese to proceed with a solar project on his property on White Road. He estimated that construction would not begin any earlier than May of 2018. If the Select Board ultimately chooses not to support an array next to the cemetery, the town might be able to buy some of the electricity produced by the array on White Rd.

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 15, at **3:00 PM**, in the own office. We should have Green Lantern’s proposal by then.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Dunkel