

# WALLINGFORD ENERGY COMMITTEE

## Minutes of the May 3, 2016 Meeting

Ken Welch called the meeting to order at 6:35. Present: John Armstrong, Doug Blodgett, Milton Moore, Ralph Nimtz, Ken Welch and Jay White.

**April Minutes.** Jay moved (and Ralph seconded) approval of the April minutes (after correction of a spelling error). There were no objections.

**Solar Developer Visit.** We were joined by James and Thomas Hand, a father and son team of solar developers from Manchester. They finance, design, permit, build and maintain small solar installations and sell the power to the landowner at a discount over rates offered by GMP. "Solar is a good investment," James explained, "and we are looking for people who own appropriate land who would like to save money on electricity. We prospect for sites in the summer, permit in the fall and winter, and build in the summer. In other words, the sites we're evaluating now would be built in the summer of 2017."

"The sites we build in Vermont are fairly small," Thomas added. "I also work as a designer for SunEdison in California and the solar installations I design for them are very large." Doug asked why the Vermont solar farms were smaller. "There are regulatory reasons but really it comes down to the landscape. In Minnesota it's flat. People are used to very large farms with industrial scale infrastructure. A big solar farm is nothing new. That's not true here, so our installations are typically less than 150 kW and cover one or two acres."

"In addition," James explained, "the economics of farming are different here. A lot of our farmers are lucky to break even. We think small scale solar is a good fit. There are parts of most farms that are not really used. We offer a way to use that land to save money on electricity and do this with no up front cost."

Ken asked about community solar. James explained that they are not involved in this kind of project at this time. "There's too much administrative cost in community solar for it to work for us. We like to have customers who use the power on site. And we like customers who aren't going to move: schools, towns and blue chip industries."

John asked about Wallingford and the Hands replied that they are particularly interested in the Pike Industries site. Ken explained that he understood that GMP was eager to get that site developed. "It's not being used. It's fairly hidden. There is southern exposure and it's close to a substation." Ken reported that when he contacted Pike several months ago they indicated that they would be open to a business proposal. Thomas

indicated that they would be interested in proposing a one to two acre installation producing 100 to 200 kW. "If Pike is interested, please let us know."

**Transportation.** The rest of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of transportation issues, particularly ways of improving the energy efficiency of school busses.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, June 7 at 6:30.

Submitted by John Armstrong.