

**Town of La Pointe
Alternative Energy Committee
May 26, 2016**

Members present: Larry Bean, Chair; Tom Banner, Glenn Carlson, Zach Montagne
Members absent: Marty Curry and Carl Frederickson
Also Present: Mike BeBeau, Xcel Energy Community Service Manger (10:25am)
Town Staff present: Lisa Potswald, Town Administrator and Planning and Zoning Administrator; Kristen Larsen, Town Foreman
Public present:

1. Call to order.

The Alternative Energy Committee called to order by Larry Bean, Chair on Thursday, May 26, 2016 at 10:06am. A quorum of the committee is present as shown by members listed above. Just a few minutes ago Xcel Energy turned the switch so our solar array is up and operating for at least the next 25 years. Also, Tom is resigning from the committee after this meeting. Thank you for your contribution to the committee, Tom!

2. Public Comment.

No comment.

3. Minutes of the following meetings to be considered for approval:

A. February 5, 2016.

Motion by Tom to approve the February 5, 2016 Alternative Energy Committee minutes as presented, second, Glenn, all in favor, all aye, motion carried.

4. Review of the Solar Array Project at the Library and Clinic

The contractor, North Wind demonstrated over the course of the project of why they were so well qualified – great to work with, efficient, communication was perfect. The only hiccup was with the Library’s power and that is being sorted out. A fence is needed around the control center. Everything went very well and Mother Nature helped out tremendously – usually we would not be pouring concrete at the beginning of May! Thank you to Lisa for all her work. Lisa said we could get a 20 year extended warranty on most of the parts for about \$1500 or 25 years for about \$2200. The panels are under warranty for 25 years for output. The inverters and other equipment typically have a shorter warranty period; inverters probably cost around \$2500 a piece. Question if the warranty covers electrical work. Lisa will check with North Wind to see who would do warranty work, especially 20 years from now. She will email the committee this information.

The most maintenance will be mowing by the Town crew and the manual adjustment of the angle of the array twice a year which takes about an hour. The solar arrays will be on the Town’s infrastructure list. Kristian could develop a maintenance checklist.

To be noted, the arrays are 2 feet higher off the ground for the same price.

Question if the Town received a copy of the one line diagram as specified in the contract. The diagram should have been submitted to the Public Utility Commission.

Larry said he is amazed at the overwhelming community support for this project. So far no one has contacted him with a negative comment, except for one comment about tree removal. All in all, there have been many pictures and support for the solar arrays.

Kristian will get an official administrative password to access the computer program to check for fault codes and to see how much power is being generated. Suggestion to place a link on the Town's website so everyone could see the power generation. Lisa will follow up on the password and suggested to post a picture of the arrays on the website.

Larry said the project needs a name and suggested La Pointe Energy Resiliency and Sustainability Initiative. The word resiliency will serve us in getting more support.

Discussion if resiliency would encompass more than just energy, say, a community farm. Larry said there is a group of people looking at food sustainability on the Island. To be noted just about everything on your plate travels an average of 1500 miles. Some agriculture has been compared to turning oil to food so there is definitely a link between energy and food production. After all, food is energy. At this time the AEC is more focused on producing renewable, sustainable energy on the Island.

The word resiliency has become a buzzword with the Department of Energy as they search for demonstration communities to portray energy resiliency at a community level and that is where we could go next - to find money for a project that would fund much more of the Town.

Question if we could add an A/K/A such as the La Pointe Solar Garden. Larry said a solar garden would serve the entire island, all residents. The committee has discussed a solar garden at the airport; Larry did the research and talked to Kristian and the Bureau of Aeronautics. The project is feasible. Individual property owners could purchase and own part of the garden and receive the tax credits and a reduced rate from Xcel Energy; not a one on one reduction of rates as with the solar array, but still, a reduced rate.

After discussion, agreement to call this the La Pointe Resiliency Project.

5. Public Relation Notices.

Mike Bebeau is now present (10:25) and is brought up to date on the discussion.

Lisa suggested sending a press release of the ribbon cutting, grand opening, and educational presentation two weeks in advance of the date and another notice two days prior to the event.

Two TV stations have expressed interest in attending.

Tom suggested signage in clinic and library right where people walk in to let people know that the Medical Clinic and Library are powered by solar.

Larry said there needs to be signage at the collectors that educates visitors as well as gives credit to Xcel Energy, North Wind, the Federal and State governments. To be noted, the Town Zoning Ordinance does regulate signs. Lisa will check on this.

The Library might want to do an educational bulletin board. Lisa will check with Connie Ross, Library Director.

Holly Tourdot, who has designed signs for the Town could do the sign.

A logo also needs to be designed. There is money in the budget as there have been two additional grants for this project for \$48,000.00 and also one-half of what the Library put forward has not been used. Suggestion to see if Holly Tourdot, Steve McHugh, the school kids, Library and La Pointe Center (contact Micaela Montagne), would design a logo. Lisa will follow up on the logo design which should be simple, cool, and readable.

Kristian said the Town receives a sign from the DNR when a grant is awarded that says, "This project was funded through" We will have to build our own sign, including the wordage.

Lisa will work with Megan Levy, State Energy Office and Director of Local Energy Programs on the wordage. Kristian said North Wind might contribute some money for the sign.

Agreement to have a large sign in front of the collectors that would appeal to visitors and a smaller signs in the Library and Medical Clinic. When wordage is complete the words could be translated to Ojibwa.

Kristian and Ben can discuss a walkway across the ditch. Benches could be added.

Lisa said there is a group of people interested in putting a butterfly garden under the collectors. Larry is concerned if the gardens were to be in raised beds as that could impinge on snow shedding.

Motion by Glenn to establish a butterfly garden committee for under the solar collectors and begin planting. Second, Tom. All in favor, all aye, motion carried. Lisa will contact the butterfly committee to invite them to the next AEC meeting for an update.

6. Dedication Event: where, when, invitations.

~~Megan Levy who gave us this grant will be~~ on Island ~~August 8th but she~~ has said, ~~no matter when you have~~ the dedication, ~~she will be there.~~ Our State Representatives, Janet Bewley and Beth Meyers also want to attend.

Agreement that the dedication will take place Friday, July 1st at 2pm at the parking lot by the collectors. In case of rain the dedication will take place in the school gym.

The following are to be sent invitations: Megan Levy, Xcel Energy, North Wind, State Senator Janet Bewley, State Assembly Representative Beth Meyers, Megan Levy, Scott Robinson of Chippewa Valley Alternative Energy (CVAE), Tom Wojciechowski, University Extension office and Independent Communities, the Town Board, Library Board, Clinic Board, Senator Tammy Baldwin, Representative Sean Duffy, Senator Ron Johnson and Megan Levy. Lisa will also ask Megan Levy who to invite. Bobbi Rongstad - Local Focus on Energy, Lauren Azar, attorney, former Public Utilities and Special Assistant to the Secretary of Energy who gave us the initial idea should be included. Larry will contact Megan about the two engineers at UW Madison.

Add to the list Josh and Craig of North Wind, Dave Aslyn, School Superintendent of the Bayfield School District and School Board members, Burke Henry, Mark Eggleston of the State Park and the media. Lisa said there will also be an invitation to the general public and to let her know of any other people to be invited.

Question if the logo should be ready before the invitations are sent out as the invites need to be sent within two weeks of the event.

Lisa will work with Larry on the press release. Much of that information can be found in Larry's Gazette article.

7. Custer Energy Fair

Megan Levy will feature our project in a presentation June 17, 18 and 19 at Custer, WI just east of Stevens Point on behalf of the Midwest Renewable Energy Association. She would like Larry to attend, also to answer questions. Larry said there might be other advantages to attending in terms of future activities. Question if there is money in the AEC budget. Lisa will check.

Motion by Glenn that the AEC authorizes Larry Bean to go to the Custer Energy Fair with reasonable expenses paid out of our budget. Second Tom. All in favor, all aye, motion carried.

8. Next Steps

Larry went to the coffee chat with the School Superintendent at the Library. Since he was the only person there he and Dave Aslyn had a good discussion about the solar project. Last year the school was reluctant to get involved due to money being spent on the school but now is a good time. Larry said the cost would be approximately \$60,000-65,000 for a solar array on the roof of the school and forwarded Dave information on solar collectors on school roofs and emergency shelters as the school acts as the Island's emergency shelter. The collectors would be owned by the school. A microgrid system with battery storage, instruments, etc could be shared as we share water with the school now. Dave was very enthused about the project. The vision of the AEC is to have the School, Clinic, Town Hall, and Library all as one unit that could function on its own in an emergency.

Ashland County might own the school building. Lisa will check.

Discussion of the Town Hall. Larry said we could add another collector for the Town Hall at the present solar array site and connect by boring under the road. For that we would need a close relationship with Xcel Energy in regards to permitting and authority. Question if going across the highway would turn us into a public utility. CVAE raised the issue while working on the request for proposals. Another option would be to put a solar array by Town Hall. Mike said some of the southern utilities are starting to restrict the net metering but does not know if Xcel is considering this. The tax credit did roll over.

Larry said there is an initiative with the Dept of Energy Resilient Communities of the National Renewable Energy lab out of Colorado who is taking unsolicited proposals for demonstration communities. There are no deadlines for proposals. Our project, which included the Town Hall, EMS and Winter Transportation buildings and a ballasted racking system at the MRF, is an ideal project. The committee needs to talk to the Town Board about a broader initiative. We also need to get the Airport and Sanitary District on board. The Sanitary District is the biggest energy consumer. We also need to think of the scope of what we would ask the Dept of Energy for. Lisa said the Town three year budget discussion begins in September.

9. Set next meeting and agenda.

Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, June 7 at 10am at Town Hall.

10. Adjourn

Motion by Tom, second, Zach to adjourn. All in favor, all aye, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 11:10am.

Minutes taken from recorder and respectfully submitted by Kathy Erickson, Clerical Assistant.

Minutes approved as presented June 7, 2016