

# Board Members

Carey Bergeron, Chair

Lawrence Ellsworth, Member

Alex Siekierski, Member

Kristen Rice, Member

Jason Reposa, Member

Martin Dietrich, Member

David Travalini, Member

Stephanie Carlisle, DPW Staff Contact

John Foresto, Bd Slctmn Liaison

Bob Tucker, PEDB Liaison

 Town of Medway

 Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Energy and Sustainability Committee

 **Special Meeting - March 31, 2021**

Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, and the Governor’s Orders imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, no in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted at this meeting. Committee members may be participating remotely. For public meetings, access via Microsoft Teams is provided for the required opportunity for public participation.

**Members present:** Carey Bergeron, Jason Reposa, Martin Dietrich, David Travalini, Larry Ellsworth, Kristin Rice, Alex Siekierski, Stephanie Carlisle and Tracy Rozak, Recording Secretary

**Also, Present:** John Foresto,Barbara Saint Andre,Charlie Myers,Christina Wolf, Senior Director of Development - Able Grid, will be present at the meeting to answer questions regarding potential battery storage.

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**Call to Order**

***Carry called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.***

Barbara stated the board voted to not to go further with Article 28 and they are going to do further study on that.

**Discuss the following Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles (attached):**

**Article 23: Solar Electric Installations**

Barbara stated chapter 48, section 3 governs certain items that a city or town is prohibited from regulating or imposes restrictions on what they can do. The state has preempted certain areas via the Dover Amendment. Solar installation companies have become more common and they want to put in solar panels anywhere they see fit. The state has a model solar bylaw which many towns have adopted. Barbara stated she has looked at many other solar bylaw models and talked with different towns and they came up with a bylaw that was modeled after the state model and the town of Shrewsbury. It has been reviewed by the Planning Board and the Town Counsel. There are different tiers of solar power. The first is roof mounted solar which is currently allowed by right as an accessory. The next tier is small scale grounded mounted accessories – requires a special permit and site plan review. The third tier is a solar parking canopy- an area that is already disturbed and you put a canopy over it- requires a special permit and site plan review. The fourth tier would be anything else. A lot of the requirements require mitigation especially for large ground mounted solar systems. There are also set back requirements that can be substantial for ground mounted systems. There are also dimensional, design and performance standards as well as safety/environmental standards and abandonment and decommissioning the systems. Dave asked about farms installing solar panels- would this affect the community farms. Barbara stated there is a state regulation that allows a certain amount of power to be considered an accessory. There is also an exemption for agricultural uses. An overlay district might be a good idea.

Stephanie stated she thinks that overall, the article is in line with the MESC goals. Jason stated he feels the wording is a little vague where it states, “principally used on the site”. Barbara stated they don’t want to have people putting in as many solar panels as they can fit. It is somewhat vague, but they can tighten it up if they need to. Alex asked if a resident wanted to put one in his back yard, would he have to go and get a whole site plan review which is expensive. Barbara stated yes but they can ask for waivers.

Stephanie asked how the MESC feels about this. Jason stated the way it is worded right now he would be in support of it but that could change if the wording changes in the future. Dave stated he would be in favor as well.

***Dave made a motion that the MESC will support article 22, the new solar bylaw. Larry seconded the motion and Larry, Alex, Kristen, Jason, Marty, David, and Carey all stated they were in favor and it was approved.***

**Article 25: Digital Signage on electric vehicle charging stations**

Barbara stated there have been minor changes to what was proposed since last time. Some of the changes have to do with the form- it moved from the special sign section into the special permit section. Table 1 schedule of uses- originally, they were going to add one line, but it was pointed out there should be a line to allow electrical vehicle charging stations without any advertising.

Barbara stated you can have a residential charging station at your own house. Signage would be allowed for multi- family housing but not allowed for single family houses. Dave Travalini asked about places of worship (non-signed). Barbara stated churches would probably be exempt. Jason said he is in favor as long as long as it doesn’t limit the residents. Barbara stated this section is under Business Use under the Schedule of Uses so it is not allowed.

***Larry made a motion that the MESC will support Article # 27. Dave Travalini seconded the motion and Larry, Jason, Alex, Kristen, Marty, David, and Carey all stated aye they were in favor and it was voted to approve.***

Barbara stated the MESC can write a letter of support or she can just inform the Select Board of their support.

**Article 28: Zoning Bylaw Amendment converting ARII to ER.**

This article is no longer on the warrant, so a long discussion was not needed. Barbara stated the proposed zoning was to rezone the land under the power lines owned by Eversource and land owned by Mr. Chaffee and land owned by Theresa Nelson. The current ER zone is not a very large zone; a large portion was already being used by Eversource for energy resources, so it seemed appropriate. The land owned by Mr. Chaffee is used as a single family home. The proposal was to amend the rezoning to require that the battery storage facility require a special permit but there were so many questions raised it was not felt to be sufficient and more research is needed.

Christina Wolf stated the mechanics of it didn’t allow discussion of the proposal itself. There was a lot of fear of the unknown and what could be proposed at a future time. Typically, she can answer questions for specific battery storage projects, but this meeting was about changing the zoning and was not about a specific storage project. If there was a specific application for battery storage, then she could get into all the specific details.

Larry stated he called for a time out because of the lack of public information and the fact that a commercial development was driving the zoning change. The location is also close to a bunch of residences which can cause real problems. He feels Christina’s organization and a whole lot of other information sources should be consulted and ask, why should it be here, what benefits are there for the town, a cost analysis should be done along with public education before a specific project is actually considered.

Carey asked if they would consider changing the zoning if this had not ever come up. Barbara stated probably not but it seemed like a good idea. Charlie stated they should use this moratorium period to look at multiple types of storage such as hydrogen based storage.

Dave stated that utility companies generally have wide latitude on what they can do. He thinks they would have good lawyers that could get around everything and give them the ability to put battery storage where they wanted. Dave asked Christina how long they are willing to wait on this. She said they do have a capacity contract and they need to have an operating system in the ground by 2024 so we do have some time to help educate people.

**Discuss and decide who will represent the MESC in the Master Plan Committee**

Carey explained that the Open Space Task Force would like a representative from each board to help with the Master Plan update. This person would attend the monthly meetings (18-22 month project) and if there was work for the MESC to do, they would all work on it not just the representative. Carey stated she will volunteer but she would like a backup person in case she can’t make a meeting. Kristen stated she would volunteer to be the back-up person.

**Approval of minutes: March 17, 2021**

No meeting minutes were approved at this meeting.

**Adjourn**

***Larry made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 pm. Alex seconded the motion and Kristen, Alex, Larry, Dave, Jason, and Carey all stated aye they were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Tracy Rozak

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| **Upcoming Medway Energy & Sustainability Committee Meetings***Meetings are typically the third Wednesday of the month*April 21. 2021May 19, 2021 |