

*The January 10, 2017, meeting opened at 4:05.*

*Present were Marj Wexler (Chair), Robin Goldberg, Juliette Haas, and Pat Konecky.*

**Minutes** of the 11/29/16 meeting were approved.

**Hampshire Power** (an arm of Hampshire Council of Governments) representative Sinead Coleman joined us to discuss what this governmental nonprofit can do for Egremont and its residents. HP is now responsible for Egremont's power aggregation (a bulk purchasing strategy to procure lower and more stable rates), and the Board of Selectmen opted to use 100% renewable sources (the contract with the town will run for 6 months and then be renegotiated). Residents who do not opt out of the program are guaranteed a 15% reduction in their electric rates, compared with NatGrid rates. (However, NatGrid will continue to deliver the electricity.) Members of the GreenStart program need to opt in to get the HP benefit.

One of HP's programs is Hampshire Solar, which allows Massachusetts residents to buy into community-based solar projects being built in other Massachusetts towns. This requires a 20-year contract, but if the homeowner moves, someone else will be found to take the spot. The company that builds these solar arrays is Nexamp.

Other HP programs include the Green Communities grants, sustainability programs, group purchasing, insurance for towns, and senior citizen programs.

Hampshire Council of Governments runs an SREC program, which helps residents with solar panels on their roofs receive energy credits.

The Green Committee committed to working with Juliette as Sustainability Coordinator to explain to townspeople what HP and HCOG can offer them. To this end, we hope to hold some public forums.

**Sustainability Coordinator:** Juliette will meet with the BoS on Feb. 6 to discuss options to handle the returnables in the glass/cans/plastics bin, as we continue to look for a way to reduce the number of hauls.

Solar on Police Department? We don't have enough money in the Green Communities account to install these panels. We will look at options.

Questions outstanding: How close is Egremont to using 100% renewable energy? What else can we do?

**LED Streetlight Offerings from National Grid:** Juliette is still requesting that Egremont be one of the towns served.

**Meeting about Co-op Solar:** The Co-op Solar program ends in May, and it is too large, and that date is too soon, for Egremont and Gt Barrington to accomplish the mission. We continue to think it's a great idea, and we may find a way (e.g., through Hampshire Power?).

**Solar arrays in Egremont:** Kearsarge Energy withdrew its applications to install two solar arrays in Egremont, without prejudice.

*Meeting adjourned 5:15 pm. Next meeting will be Tuesday, February 14, 4 PM.*

*Submitted by Marj Wexler, Sec'y.*