

Select Board Sidelines

April 14, 2021

Submitted by Bill Lombardi

Solar Power – Last fiscal year we voted to install solar panels on the Public Works building as a way to manage electricity expense and to be more environmentally conscious. The main and most immediate benefit was to control the cost of the Town’s electricity. We are now getting the CMP statements to a point where we can begin to make billing comparisons.

There are two major electric accounts, Public Works and the Town Office. Public Works was averaging \$220 per month. For March 2021 the Public Works CMP bill was \$16. Due to billing statements, we can’t be as precise with the Town Office account however the savings is about 33% or between \$600 to \$800 per month. Streetlights, impacted by the use of LED lighting, also looks to have a reduced bill by about 40%.

Now the even better news, the Town will enjoy these savings every month for the life of the solar panels, about 20 years. Kudos to a forward-looking Town.

Roads Workshop - We have scheduled a follow-up to our original meeting for Monday, May 3. This will be held via Zoom. Watch for the agenda to be posted.

Select Board Meetings & Zoom - Hopefully, restrictions on meeting size and other emergency restrictions will be lifted in the next few months and we will resume in person meetings. The Board voted to continue to stream meetings although, due to technical limitations, it will not be via Zoom. Watch for more news as restrictions change. One of the benefits to the Zoom meetings has been the increased public attendance at these meetings.

Regular attendees of the Zoom meeting have noted that one of the changes that has been made by this Board has been the increased use of Committees. Regularly, as part of our board agenda, we receive reports from the following committees: Broadband, Local Food Ordinance, Aging in Place & The Future of the Thompson Community Center.

Our objective with these committees, besides addressing important Town issues, is to increase community participation in Town Government as well as acknowledging that many folks have valuable expertise that can positively impact the services and decisions that the Town needs to make.

Local Food Ordinance Committee - The initial ordinance was presented to the Board a few weeks ago and forwarded to the Town’s attorney for review. The attorney had a few recommendations that the committee reviewed at its meeting on April 7. Some clarifying language changes were made. Most importantly, something was not part of the attorney's recommendations, was the adding of the following label for all products covered by this ordinance. “This product is made and sold in accordance with the Local Food Ordinance, not in a certified facility.” It is expected that these changes will be presented to the Select Board at the next meeting on April 20. Hopefully, the Board will vote to put the ordinance on the June ballot.

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Aging in Place - There was a robust turn out for the St. Patrick's Day take away meal. Fifty-two lunches were served along with many smiles and lots of expressions of gratitude. Our next luncheon is scheduled for June 24. You will see more information as we get closer to that date. Our early summer menu has featured hamburgers and hot dogs in the past. It remains to be determined, given COVID restriction, how this will be accomplished.

This committee needs additional volunteers. Also, our Chairperson wishes to relinquish her title but not her participation. Anyone willing to help? Please complete a "Statement of Interest" form found on the town website and email or deliver it to our Town Manager. Thank you to the volunteers on this committee for making our luncheons such a great success.