

Meeting Minutes (*approved 1/10/24, 5-0-0*)

Energy and Climate Committee

December 20, 2023 7:30 pm via Zoom

\*In compliance with the revised Open Meeting Law requirements, this meeting was live streamed via Zoom.

Members: Ellen Tohn, Anne Harris, Bill Huss, Tom Sciacca

Associate member: John Harper

Wayland Sustainability Manager Abigail Shute;

Guest: Taro Gold, Ampion

Ellen Tohn called the meeting to order and read notice preamble when quorum was present at 7:30 PM

Public comment: None

### **Community Solar Discussion with Taro Gold, Director of Sales, Ampion**

Ellen noted the intent is to green the Town's municipal electricity supply. Taro summarized the reasons for the MA community solar program, esp. when all other options have been exhausted. Ampion helps solar project developers by providing the back-end servicing of community solar customers. Ampion manages the revenue flows on behalf of developers/owners of community solar farms. They're not a developer or an asset owner. They are a public benefits corporation. They currently work with 20-30 solar developers in MA and other states.

Taro explained MA community solar incentive regulations allow up to 50% of the solar output to be sold to anchor tenants (tenants who hold a large amount of the space on and of the energy produced by that community solar array) under long-term power purchase agreements (similar to what Wayland did for the four existing projects in Wayland). Technically, Wayland would purchase solar credits generated by the project working with the town's electric utility (Eversource). The solar credits are purchased at a slight percentage discount to their value, effectively reducing the cost of the electricity purchased from Eversource. Wayland could be such an anchor tenant. The percentage discount can be fixed under the long-term contract, locking in dollar savings on that portion of Wayland's energy requirements.

Bill Huss asked if other MA towns are purchasing community solar credits in this manner. Taro noted Fitchburg, Melrose, Haverhill as communities that Ampion has worked with. The roles can vary. In some cases, the town is buying the solar credits to reduce the cost of its own use. Ampion also works with towns to facilitate their citizens buying community solar credits (weblink to their municipality page: <https://ampion.net/community-solar/municipalities>).

Bill asked how to move forward; he suggested the Town could issue an RFP as a procurement. Taro notes Ampion could help Wayland run the RFP on a consulting basis. Ampion would advertise the RFP to its developer partners. Their services might come at no cost to the Town, if there's a promise to work with one of their developers. In effect, Ampion can play a matchmaker role in connecting Wayland with solar developers seeking an anchor tenant. Taro notes some towns have done this. Ellen suggests the Town likely would do a competitive procurement just to ensure a competitive price. On timing, Tom asks if we can see a list of developers and where their current projects are located. Taro and Ellen noted that past

project locations are not necessarily indicative of where future projects are located, provided they're in Eversource East. Bill suggests that Wayland could include project criteria into its RFP. Taro notes that new project development has slowed in the last couple of years due to utility constraints. He suggests an RFP issued in mid-2024 might receive responses related to projects to be built 2-3 years out, likely conditioned on the projects being permitted.

After Taro left, Ellen canvassed relative interest from the Committee, and asked that it be considered further at a future ECC meeting. Abigail will follow up with Melrose on their experience with Ampion.

## **SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER ABIGAIL SHUTE'S REPORT**

**Department of Energy Resources (DOER) annual report submitted in late November.** Abigail thanked Anne for her help in completing the report.

**Green Communities grant requests** – our proposal for projects submitted. Waiting for response from DOER

**META (Municipal Energy Technical Assistance) grant application** submitted in November. Focus on Middle School battery installation. DOER advises the application is under review.

**Council on Aging charging station** – applied for EVIP(Electric Vehicle Incentive Program) grant application (up to \$50K per address of equipment costs for charging stations here in town. If approved (or if >2 months wait), then Wayland can apply to Eversource for Make Ready program subsidy for the installation costs. Tom asked about charging policy in town. Abigail notes any revenues would offset the operating costs. Specific rates not set yet. Tom suggests rates be set to avoid cars “camping out” at stations for long periods of time.

**Net Zero Vehicle First Policy** – The Town is working on a vehicle policy which could require first considering electric vehicles for new vehicle purchases. Abigail met with Fire Chief, Police Chief, and DPW's Tom Holder to discuss the plan, eligible cars, how to define emergency vehicles, and the approval process for buying non-EV vehicles. They suggested involving the Town Manager in the input. Ellen believes such a policy will be required as a condition of applying for future Green Communities grants, perhaps as a branch or upper level of that program.

**Wayland High School Projects** – Abigail is continuing to explore retro-commissioning tasks and contractor options. Guardian wasn't able to participate this fall. She's exploring with B2Q their ability to participate. She is working with the School Department to streamline/coordinate sustainability goals and project priorities. On composting, she notes the program is currently funded through mid-2024. She has secured School Committee agreement to include composting in the budget. Exploring district-wide composting program.

**Planning Projects** – She continues to work with PowerOptions to develop a fleet electrification roadmap. Still working with DPW on fleet details. Expected in next two months. Applied for funding from DOER via PowerOptions to help generate a building decarbonization roadmap. Waiting to hear DOER response. How they respond will depend in part on number of applicants. MAPC MetroWest fleet electrification study is finally underway. Meeting in early January. Will explore pathways to fleet electrification. Another opportunity to collaborate with the schools.

**Grant Award** – MAPC (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) Accelerating Climate Resiliency Grant (ACR) grant was awarded to the Town working in collaboration with other towns for \$44K for climate resilience outreach to seniors. Dealing with heat stress. Outreach will start in January/February.

**Town Hall ESCO (Energy Services Company)** – she and Ben Keefe are still scoping details on specific measures. Working on Eversource on incentives. Outcome will be a hybrid heating and cooling system. Too expensive to go fully electric.

**Council on Aging /Community Center solar project** - Select received the final draft letter of intent from the Town. Town worked with Town Counsel (KP Law) on the language. Town waiting for Select agreement.

**Loker Elementary rooftop solar project** – Select to provide pricing. Abigail shared design with the School Committee. Around 100kW in capacity. About a third of the school's load.

**Sustainability page on the website** – now is up and running. Abigail now updating it regularly. Ellen suggests that the Committee review it and provide feedback & suggestions at a future meeting.

#### **UPDATED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AND TARGETS LIST.**

MassCEC (Clean Energy Center) Accelerating Clean Transportation (ACT) School Bus – Abigail reviewed it. Seems like designed to assist towns that are runners-up to the EPA program. Suggests Wayland apply first to the US EPA Clean School Bus Rebate Program. Applications due January 1<sup>st</sup>. Would work with Highland Electric (electric school bus vendor/operator - <https://highlandfleets.com/>). But, she notes that the awards are in the form of rebate, and only would cover up to \$100K for buses, which typically cost up to \$400K and that environmental justice (EJ) communities are favored under the EPA program. In effect, the odds are low for Wayland to win an award and Wayland would still have to pay for most of the cost. Ellen suggests letting this go. Ellen notes the Town only has one school bus (2009, with low mileage). Bottom line: better to work with the Town's contracted school bus operator First Student than try to do it on our own.

MAPC Technical Assistance Program – Wayland can apply for this. Funding of a diverse set of projects related to the state's 2050 climate goals. \$25 - \$60K in grants. Applications accepted on a rolling basis, but best if done by January 12<sup>th</sup>. Ellen asks if MAPC staff provide the support, or outside consultants. May affect what sorts of projects to propose. Tom and Abby suggest emergency preparedness/flood resiliency on a regional basis, e.g., the downstream towns of the Sudbury River. Tom and Abby to coordinate on who to talk with on a regional basis to piggy-back on regional efforts.

**PROPOSED STATE SPECIALIZED OPT-IN SPECIALIZED BUILDING ENERGY CODE** – Ellen presented to the Select Board intention to submit three warrant articles. The first is the opt-in Specialized building energy code. The second would extend the term of Loker solar PPA (Power Purchase Agreement) from 20 to 25 years. The third would be to authorize the Town to proceed with the COA solar project and other smaller projects (to facilitate their moving ahead). Ellen and Abby are working on text and template language. Will speak with other committees to see their warrant article language.

Anne Harris moved that the Energy & Climate Committee recommend that the Select Board propose three Town Meeting articles at the 2024 Spring Town Meeting:

- 1) That the Town adopt the Massachusetts opt-in Specialized building energy code.
- 2) Amend the 2021 Town Meeting warrant article that authorized the Town to enter into a power purchase agreement to purchase electricity from a solar project to be located at Loker Elementary School for a term of up to 25 years (up from 20 years as approved by the 2021 Town Meeting).
- 3) Authorize the Town to enter into a power purchase agreement to purchase electricity from a solar project to be located at the new Council on Aging building for a term of up to 25 years.

Bill Huss seconded the motion. Ayes: Harris, Huss, Tohn, Sciacca. Nays: none. The motion passed 4-0-0.

**WAYLAND ELECTRICITY CHOICE program for purchasing green energy for town residents** No progress on Department of Public Utilities approval.

**PLUG-IN INITIATIVE WITH ACTION, NATICK & FRAMINGHAM.** Anne advises this is an exciting program with four towns to promote heat pumps, solar and community solar options for residents and small businesses. First step is a survey. Survey now in the community, distributed in social media, e.g., Wayland E-News, school newsletters, and Wayland Voters Network. Ellen presented preliminary survey results. Wayland and Natick have the most responses to date.

**ENERGIZE WAYLAND** plans additional outreach efforts. The towns are practicing how to get the word out on clean energy measures.

#### **APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER MINUTES / NEXT MEETING**

Anne Harris moved to approve the minutes of the November 8th meeting. Tom Sciacca seconded and the motion passed, 4-0-1, with Tohn, Sciacca, and Harris voting aye, no nays, one abstention (Huss).

The next meeting is January 10<sup>th</sup> (second Wednesday).

#### **BUSINESS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED BY CHAIR**

Tom Sciacca notes the cash rebates for EVs take too long. Another example of where the state could do better.

Meeting adjourned at 9:33pm.

These minutes respectfully submitted by John Harper.



# Massachusetts' Community Solar Program

The easiest savings & sustainability win for Mass Organizations & Businesses

**AMPION**



# Executive Summary

## Why Community Solar?

- Guaranteed cost-savings
- Local grid resilience and sustainability
- Easiest win to benefit your organization

## Why Ampion?

- Energy experts
- Long-term partner
- Track record
- Public Benefits Corporation
- Data security



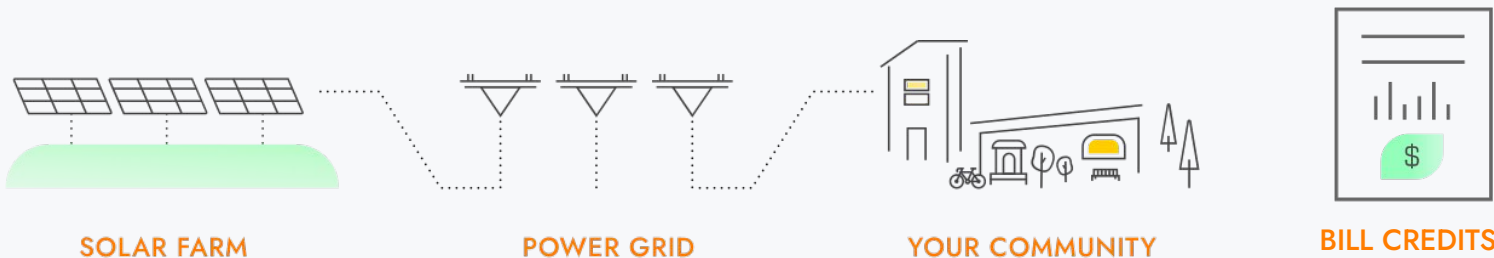




**In Massachusetts**, the program was designed to encourage the development of solar farms, contributing toward its goal of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The legislation incentivises developers, while ensuring that financial benefits are passed on to the participants.

# How Community Solar Works

States design programs to encourage renewables



- 1.** Once you sign up, Ampion assigns you a share of the solar farm's electricity generation. Sunlight is absorbed and electricity is produced.
- 2.** The electricity is delivered right onto the utility grid. The utility measures the value of the electricity that is produced on your behalf.
- 3.** The utility sends you a monthly invoice just as it always has. Only now it will include solar credits, reducing the amount that you owe.
- 4.** Ampion invoices you for the solar credits generated on your behalf, at 90% of the credit value. This is where the savings come in!

# The Ampion Experience



## A trusted partner for Municipalities & Government

From subscribing as an anchor tenant to running community opt-in programs for residents, we help you meet your goals through Community Solar

- We partner and serve over **30 Municipalities** and over **20 housing authorities** across multiple states
- Our **Partnership Program** allows you to showcase your leadership and provide value to your residents
- **Data security is important to us** and backed by our ISO 27001 certification



### Other Municipalities & HAs Enrolled with Ampion →

- City of Haverhill, MA
- Town of Eliot, ME
- Town of Enfield, ME
- Town of Ballston, NY
- Town of Clifton Park, NY
- City of Minneapolis, MN
- City of Minnetonka, MN
- Saugus Housing Authority
- Revere Housing Authority,
- Portland Housing Authority, ME



## What our customers are saying



"Access to Community Solar subscriptions for our sites is a valuable way to save on electricity costs. We have worked with Ampion since 2015...and have clear transparency into the production, value of credits, and our costs...Unlike some subscription managers, we can access this information easily and get timely responses on our questions with Ampion." - **Nate Dick, Director, Preservation of Affordable Housing**

"We discovered that installing solar panels on top of the State Theatre was impossible...We are thrilled to have found an alternative way to support renewable energy and climate solutions for our community." - **Lauren Wayne, General Manager, State Theatre**



"The Town of Eliot wholeheartedly supports this initiative and we strongly encourage you to sign up. Through Maine's Community Solar program, you make your home or business more sustainable by helping to generate clean energy from a local solar farm, and even save up to 15% on your electric bills." - **Mike Sullivan, Town Manager, Town of Eliot**



## FAQs

Visit [Ampion's FAQ Page](#) for more

### Will community solar affect my supply or delivery rates?

No. Supply and delivery rates will remain a function of your utility and/or supply company.

### Does it cost anything to enroll?

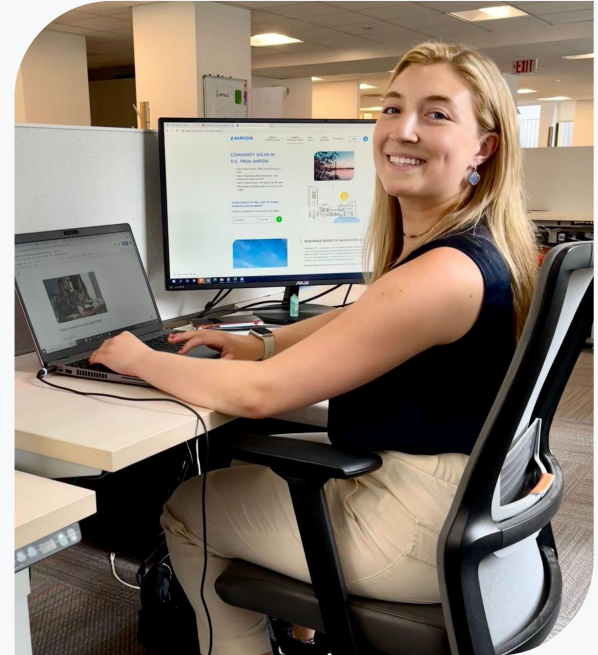
No, there is no cost to join. As a subscriber, you will only receive monetary benefit.

### Is this the same as third party supply?

No. Community Solar is a different program entirely, and you can participate in both if you choose. Instead of taking over the supply portion of your bill, Community Solar provides monetary credits on your electricity bill, reducing the amount you owe.

### How is my allocation determined?

Referencing your utility bill, we can determine how much electricity you typically use. We then assign you a portion of the solar farm's output that is dedicated to meeting your needs.



## Next Steps



1

### **Send over a copy of each utility bill you're considering for the program**

Ampion provides you an energy savings estimate so you have a tangible understanding of the benefit.

2

### **Review the agreement**

We're available to go over the terms and answer any questions for you.

3

### **Choose to enroll**

It's an easy process that can be as quick as 10 minutes.

4

### **Enjoy the benefits of community solar!**

Reduce your electricity costs without hassle and support local sustainable energy



**Thank you!**