

## Conservation Commission Meeting Report November 19, 2018

The Lisbon, Maine Conservation Commission convened its November 19, 2018 meeting, at the MTM Center at 6:00 p.m. Present included members Annica McGuirk, Richard Nadeau, Alan Seamans and Richard Main. Also present was staff advisor, Mark Stevens. Nick Samson, a representative of Revision Energy was an invited guest.

The CC invited the Revision Energy representative to introduce and inform the CC members of the possible benefits of municipal solar power usage. Municipalities which have already sited municipal solar farms include: Belfast, South Portland and Portland. Other municipalities are also in the research, planning and implementation phases of siting solar farms on former, capped municipal landfills and other, otherwise unusable municipal properties.

Discussed were the goals of siting solar facilities. They include an offsetting of utility costs and reasonable use of otherwise unusable municipal properties.

System costs would be based on size and location of the solar farm. Siting on capped landfills would incur additional costs because of the size and shape of the foundations. Total siting costs, based on established farm costs, range from \$100,000 to \$750,000. Panel quality has greatly improved in recent years. They are currently warranted for 25 years, although they are considered to have a 40 year life.

Municipal payback is estimated to be 20-25 years. Some municipalities bond the siting costs. Some municipalities enter into a purchase agreement. In the purchase agreement, a private firm will site the solar farm and then sell the solar farm to the municipality after 5-7 years. This type of contract is advantageous because the private firm is able to apply for a substantial grant from the federal government.

We also discussed the siting of solar on top of municipal buildings. Using rooftop solar sites reduces the initial cost of the system and reduces the utility usage for that building. Richard Main agreed to contact the School Superintendent Richard Green and encourage the Lisbon School Committee to consider this possible energy alternative. Mr. Green was contacted and copies of emails were forwarded. Revision Energy was to also contact the Superintendent.

Further contact and sharing of articles which are informative will take place between Revision Energy and members of the CC.

In the December meeting, December 18, 2018, the members of the CC will decide whether or not to recommend the Lisbon Town Council investigate the possible use of solar utility, in the future.

The CC also discussed Beaver Park and the need for accurate trail maps. Annica McGuirk will investigate applying for grant monies to employ a college or graduate school student to create an accurate trail map for the community. Discussion also ensued regarding the upgrading of the Summer Street Park trails in 2019.

The members heard information regarding municipal, composting programs. Lisbon is in a unique situation because Lisbon has a transfer station and limited land to site solar. At the present time, yard waste which can be composted is transported to a local landscape business – at no cost to the municipality.

Household waste, which can be composted, is unfortunately deposited in the roll-off container. It is estimated that up to 40% of household waste in Maine, is put in with trash which cannot be recycled. Lisbon is fortunate in that residents and transfer station personnel are diligent in separating waste from garbage which cannot be composted. Transfer station personnel hope to have new signage installed soon which will assist residents in the sorting their trash, to reduce municipal costs of disposal.

Two decades ago, Lisbon Transfer Station personnel were able to purchase, and sell at cost, household compost containers. Since then, the average cost of the containers has increased by 350%. The same containers, which were given to residents, or sold for \$30 now cost \$101 – or higher.

Richard Main will investigate the possible use of a Facebook survey to determine how Lisbon residents compost their household garbage. We hope to also determine residents' interest in purchasing compost bins, as part of a bulk purchase. More information will be provided at the December 18, 2018.

The CC meeting closed about 7:30 pm. the next meeting will be at Frank's, December 18, 2018, at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard Main