

South Hadley works on becoming a green community

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SOUTH HADLEY — The Select Board and School Committee both approved an Energy Reduction Plan to help apply to become a designated green community.

The Select Board received a presentation from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Senior Land Use and Environment Planner Mimi Kaplan during its meeting on June 4.

Kaplan said that almost 300 towns are already designated as a green community and once designated, South Hadley will receive a designation grant of approximately \$150,000 to \$170,000 to be used for energy efficiency measures.

Once that grant is spent, a town can apply each year for additional competitive grant funding.

The plan itself summarizes the town and its municipal energy usage and an energy reduction plan.

Kaplan talked about the goal set forth by the Department of Energy Resources is to try to achieve 20% reduction in energy use in five years.

Based on the plan, South Hadley anticipates achieving this goal through energy conservation levels to ensure that municipal facilities are more efficient, use more clean energy and emit fewer greenhouse gases.

Recent energy audits of buildings in South Hadley identified projects in lighting retrofits, weatherization/insulation, HVAC improvements, electrification and pump and motor controls.

The plan has an overview of projects for years one through three and years four and five and identified those by looking at buildings with highest energy usage and areas of least efficiency/greatest waste.

For the first three years, planned improvements include South Hadley High School, Michael E. Smith Middle School, The Ledges Golf Course building and the DPW.

Year four and five improvements include work at Town Hall, the wastewater treatment plant and Mosier Elementary School.

Kaplan explained that those projects can also change and are just listed as a baseline to reach the 20% reduction goal.

She said, “Even though the audit was completed, and the proposals have been submitted for three projects from those vendors, once the town is designated and gets the designation grant funding, you can do other projects. You are not held to these particular projects, but I image some listed will be priority.”

Building Operations Director Scott Moore and other members of the community have been working on this plan for quite some time.

Town Administrator Lisa Wong said this has been a multi-year effort to try and become a green community.

“This is a huge accomplishment. I want to thank Mimi and Scott for all their hard work,” Wong added.

Kaplan said PVPC can also help apply for grants and complete annual reports once accepted.

The School Committee approved the plan during its June 6 meeting.

Moore has met with the School Committee in the past about laying out what he and the town were trying to accomplish by becoming a green community.

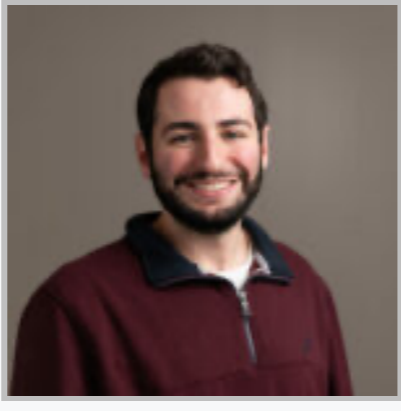
Since the Energy Reduction Plan was recently approved by the Select Board, Superintendent Mark McLaughlin said it was important to review and vote on it as a committee to show its partnership.

McLaughlin discussed the impacts that relate to the South Hadley School District. It added that it’s a plan that talks about in any way energy gets used and expended or considered by the entities of the town that they would be aligned with the principles of the energy reduction plan.

He said, “Things like for instance, vehicles that the town might operate, or the schools might operate so thinking of our buses. Thinking about future projects like even the Mosier project and having that be informed by decisions around energy efficiency. Making sure that our town buildings when they would need to be retrofitted or what have you that they would be done to the requirements of energy reduction and efficiency.”

The energy reduction plan showed that the buildings with highest energy usage included South Hadley High School, Michael E. Smith Middle School and Plains Elementary School so Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Business Operations Jennifer Voyik said, “things like LED lighting throughout the building, weather stripping, those types of things are some of the goals that are a part of this plan.”

The Energy Reduction Plan was adopted by the town and will be sent to the state as part of the green community application.



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