



Town of Leicester
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Public Forums - Green Community Designation

The Town of Leicester will hold public forums Tuesday March 14th and Tuesday April 11th at 6:30PM at the Town Hall to present information and solicit feedback on whether to seek designation as a Green Community. The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Green Communities Designation and Grant Program helps municipalities navigate and meet the five criteria required to become a Green Community, in turn qualifying them for grants that finance additional energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

Town officials and DOER representatives will be on hand to explain the five criteria the Town must meet for designation. Since the Town has achieved four out of the five criteria there will be a specific focus on the adoption of the *Stretch Energy Code* which remains. It is well known that Leicester Town Meetings have voted against the adoption of this code several times. However, over the years since the Town Meeting considered it, the requirements of the base energy code have nearly caught up to so-called *Stretch Energy Code*.

Additionally, there will be a focus on the grant programs that will become available to the Town if it receives designation as a Green Community. The amount of funding that the Town has missed out on is substantial, but there is still a chance to claim these funds. For example during the last annual grant round three Town's in the region were awarded \$683,283 through the Green Community Grant program. These funds are being used to undertake energy improvements that will reduce energy consumption and utility costs.

Ultimately the decision to adopt the *Stretch Energy Code* lies in the hands of the voters at Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen will consider placing an article on the May 2017 Annual Town Meeting warrant for this purposes. I encourage residents and other interested parties to attend the public forums to discuss this matter. Given our constrained revenues the Town must aggressively pursue all available sources of revenue. Therefore, in my opinion, given the parity in the energy codes and opportunities that become available after designation as a Green Community, it is important for the Town to reconsider this opportunity.

Best Regards,

Kevin J. Mizikar
Town Administrator