

**Town of New London
Energy Committee
May 4, 2009**

Present: Bob Crane, Alice Sprickman, Jack Harrod, Dave Sauerlein, Mark Vernon, Mike Mellor

Also present: Ed Burt

Mark Vernon opened the meeting at 7:00 pm. He asked if everyone on the Committee knew that Chet Reynolds had resigned and stated the following recommendations that Chet had submitted:

- A) expand the budget
- B) recruit and expand the committee membership
- C) work with the Town in a more participatory role
- D) work with the partners of the collaborative NHECC
- E) utilize REGI and EPA block grants to fund projects other than municipal buildings
- F) work closely with other agencies and charitable organizations
- G) obtain a qualified grant writer
- H) reach out regionally, nationally, and globally
- I) create a database of statistics on all proposals and follow-up on all data to evaluate the outcome

Mark said that he thought it was a combination of the above things needing to be done and not having the energy and memory to continue as the Chair that were the reasons Chet had resigned.

Dave Sauerlein commented that he thought the Committee should do something formal to recognize the two years of service that Chet had given to the Committee.

Jack Harrod recommended that the minutes show the Committee thanks Chet for his service and commends him for his effort and his contribution(s). Mike Mellor said that one of the things Chet had done was to stand up at the Town Meeting two years ago and tell everyone that the Town needed this Committee. He said that without Chet the Committee would not be here and that Chet was truly their leader. Jack Harrod made a motion to officially commend Chet and Bob Crane seconded the motion. The MOTION was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Jack Harrod stated that the Town did award commendations to distinguished citizens who have made contributions during the year and the Committee agreed to recommend Chet to Jessie Levine, Town Administrator.

Mike Mellor said that there is a lot of interest in energy issues around town as is indicated by the League of Women Voters, which has very good attendance at its lecture series. He

went on to say that the Committee needed to put on some kind of program, either in conjunction with the League or by itself and bring in qualified people to present information to the townspeople, citing nuclear energy as one topic that should be discussed, and raising the Committee's visibility.

Mark Vernon stated that he had spoken with Jessie Levine and she agreed with Chet that the Committee was basically an orphan committee and they needed to get on the same page with the Board of Selectmen, pointing out the failed Warrant Article tax incentive for solar and wind that the Selectmen took off the agenda. He went on to say that Jessie commented that there are a lot of grant opportunities which the Committee should go for and that Peter Stanley offered to be the Town liaison with the Committee and attend meetings. Mark said that expansion of the budget for the Committee was not likely at this time, but that Jessie would help with recruiting and expansion of the Committee membership.

Dave Sauerlein commented that the Committee needed to know what its authority was and its responsibility. Mark agreed and said that there needed to be a recalibration.

Dave Sauerlein stated that he would be getting the Colby-Sawyer student report on the wind tower endeavor and get it to the Committee as soon as he did.

Alice Sprickman stated that she will not be coming back in the Fall and the Committee needed to make some decisions regarding the articles submitted to the papers and the Library displays. She wondered if the articles were more distracting rather than contributing because she thought there were a lot of words, but no actions and was it worth it to the Committee.

Jack Harrod commented that the Library was critical in having information available to the public and he applauded Alice for having done so much with that. Mark asked Alice if she would be coming to the meetings until August and she said that she would provided there were meetings.

Mark asked Ed Burns if he would like to join the Committee and Ed responded that he would like to know what the Committee would be doing as he was not sure what the charge of the Committee was. Alice responded that the charge in the warrant article was that the Committee would act as advisors to the Board of Selectmen on energy issues and to help educate the townspeople. Jack Harrod interjected that part of the problem was the Committee was created by the warrant article which was voted on at the Town Meeting and the Selectmen had not taken the initiative themselves. Chet had gotten enough signatures to have it put on the warrant and get it voted in. The Selectmen had not been in favor of the warrant. Mark stated that the Committee did try to take it a step further early on by doing what they could to help Town government municipal facilities reduce carbon emissions and also advise them by recommending things like the no idling policy, which the Selectmen did adopt into an ordinance.

Alice interjected that if the Committee was going ahead with the DES plan, she felt that it was vital to connect with the Selectmen in a different role so that they would not just be doing things by themselves. Mike Mellor commented that Tina Helm had attended 2 or 3 of the meetings at the Library and seemed to be very interested in the issues.

Mark stated that Jessie suggested having the Selectmen come to the Committee meetings and Jack said that he did not sense any resistance from the Selectmen to the Energy Committee. Dave Sauerlein asked what was pulled from the warrant and Jack responded that the town assessor did not know how to handle the assessment of homes in the area that had added solar and wind efficiencies and had asked the Selectmen how to deal with it. The State law said that the towns may grant a tax abatement to encourage these sorts of things. There was no clear policy on it and Jack attended a meeting last fall when oil prices were way up and both Mark and Larry felt it was unfair to provide tax breaks to people who could afford to put in expensive alternative energy systems when other people could barely afford to fill their oil tanks. So they agreed that the town policy would be that if you spent x amount of dollars to install a wind turbine or solar, the assessor will not increase your assessment by the added value. He went on to say that now the State incentive is 30% of your cost to install these systems rather than the original cap of \$2,000.

Mark then asked the Committee to discuss the election of a new Chair. The members asked him if he would take the position and he said that he was almost at 'no' because it needed someone who could devote the time to go to the symposiums and various meetings to keep abreast of the energy issues and changes.

Jack Harrod was asked if he would take the position and he said that while he had the time, he did not want to go traveling all over the State for meetings. Dave Sauerlein interjected that he would rather see the Committee setting a clear purpose and goals and then take action steps to accomplish those goals. Jack said that one of the things that keeps getting promised and not done is the posting of the no idling signs and Mark interjected that Jessie promised to have it done 'the day after tomorrow'.

Mark nominated Jack Harrod for the position of Chair and Bob Crane seconded the nomination. Jack said that there might be others members not present, like Frank Anzalone or Dave Harris, who might want the position. Alice interjected that Lansing Reed had submitted a letter of resignation to Chet Reynolds. Jack Harrod said that he would consider doing it, but couldn't commit the intense interest that Chet had. Dave Sauerlein commented that they would appreciate Jack facilitating and coordinating the Committee. Jack responded that if he were to do it, what he would put most of his effort into was making the Committee more prominent with the Selectmen and try to do more things to raise the Committee's visibility within the town. Dave Sauerlein said that the Committee needed to know what the Selectmen wanted them to do to help the Selectmen as well and Jack said that was the first question he would ask them. Mark gave Jack a key to the building and said that he would draft a thank you letter to send to Chet from the Committee.

Alice Sprickman said that there was a meeting in Concord on Saturday, June 20th, and that the Town would reimburse the \$20 fee to anyone who attended.

Mike Mellor asked if there would be a lecture series in the Fall and suggested a wood burning plant as a topic.

Jack Harrod stated that the next meeting would be Monday, June 1st.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Camille Holmes
Recording Secretary

Reviewed by

Jack Harrod
Chair