

Energy Committee Meeting Minutes of April 12, 2010

Members Present: Jack Harrod (Chair), Peter Stanley (Zoning Board Administrator), Russell Aney, Dave Sauerwein, Mike Meller, Joan Cobb, Dave Harris, Bill Spear

Members Absent: Frank Anzalone, Mark Vernon (Vice Chair), Bob Crane

Jack Harrod called the **MEETING TO ORDER at 7:07pm.**

1. Minutes of March 1, 2010 Meeting - Harrod asked if the minutes from the last meeting were acceptable to those committee members who were present. Not hearing any suggestions for amendments, he asked for a motion.

IT WAS MOVED (Dave Sauerwein) **AND SECONDED** (Dave Harris) **to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2010 Energy Committee Meeting minutes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. Master Plan Schedule/Energy Chapter – Russ Aney said that the chapter is still in draft form and he hopes to have it done soon.

3. Municipal Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) Status - Aney said that he has touched base with Laura Chesnut to coordinate a review with an initial report to the Board of Selectmen. It was originally supposed to be scheduled for next week but they were bumped because Enfield had to have its presentation the same night. They will be doing it in May but will try and get the report done ahead of time for the Energy Committee to review at the next meeting. Aney commented that he has been working with SIFE students from Colby-Sawyer College, inputting data into the Energy Star Portfolio tool as well as the Small Town Carbon Calculator tool. He has met with the students a couple of times on this project. By the end of April they will have all the data compiled and will be in “report mode” and will be able to see how the energy consumption of New London compares to other small towns. Aney hoped they would be able to report to the Selectmen by the third week in May. He said that the report is something the auditors will want to see before they decide which building they want to study. Harrod said he appreciated the fact that Aney got such a good response from the students at Colby-Sawyer College.

4. Energy Efficiency Community Block Grants (EECBG) - Harrod said on April 19th at 6pm the Board of Selectmen will meet to decide to accept the grant money that has been offered to them. Aney will make a presentation on the three projects which were awarded grants. Harrod noted that the public is invited to the Board of Selectmen meetings and that they encourage comments and supporters. Aney explained that the three grants awarded were as follows: 1. \$335,000 for the school district, which was the largest grant given in the State of New Hampshire, 2. \$9,000 for the lighting in town buildings, and 3, \$15,000 for the Small Hydro study, including a feasibility study of the Elkins dam from a dam expert. Harrod noted that this small hydro project should be considered a pilot program that could open doors for towns throughout the state. What the study shows could determine how other projects throughout the state are carried out.

Peter Stanley said that he and Aney had a preliminary meeting with Tim Drew at DES who coordinates the agencies to be involved with permitting for small hydro projects. Others from the dam bureau, the heritage bureau, fish and game, and from wetlands and in-stream flows committees were there at the meeting as well. Stanley felt it was interesting that there are a number of decision points that could help keep this simple. The town would also need to have authorization from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) before proceeding with any project.

Stanley felt the group they met with was very receptive to the fact that they were meeting this early to discuss the small hydro possibilities in the area. Aney felt that Mr. Drew did a good job pulling together the right individuals to open the door for this work.

Aney said that each project has different requirements. For the hydro study they have to put out an RFP (which he would be writing) to spend the \$15,000 to do the feasibility study and the write-up. He knows a woman in Vermont who could do a portion of the work. The rest would be journaling and documenting and creating a roadmap

document. Aney said that he would be bidding on the work to be done. Stanley assured the committee that there would be no conflict of interest with Aney bidding on this work.

Aney went on to explain that Shelley Hadfield would be engaged by the Town of New London to administer the grants. She will make sure that all Federal requirements are met. He added that the school district grant would fall under Section 106 of the Federal Historic Preservation Guidelines. With regards to lighting, the old town garage, built before 1960, the “cottage” at the transfer station (which they use for storage and bathroom facilities) and the Post Office in Elkins, and Tracy Library will get some lighting fixtures. Each of these buildings counts as “historic” in nature and will fall under these guidelines as well. Aney explained that they may just have to take before and after pictures to prove they only changed bulbs and not anything else. Exit signs will change over from light bulbs to LED.

Aney noted that the school district portion is a little challenging. He said that Honeywell would not be happy due to the fact that it looks like they will have to put the contract out for a competitive bid. When Honeywell was chosen to do the audits, the minutes at that time suggest that they chose not to do it on a competitive basis. Title 10, Section 600 is something they have to comply with. Aney said that they may find that the work Honeywell has estimated as costing \$2.9 million dollars can be done for much less.

Aney explained that three of the school buildings have sections built prior to 1960 so they will have to have an architectural historian review them to make sure they are not going to be adversely affected. He believed they could have this review done in parallel with the RFP process and could have it completed in 6-8 weeks. He did not feel that this would hold up the rest of the project.

Harrod asked about the company “NEEDCO” (Northeast Electrical Distributors) which is pursuing lighting opportunities in New Hampshire. Aney explained that this company was not one of the winners of the PSNH RFP process by which PSNH selected vendors to work with small businesses in the state. They chose one company for this area, which is Lightech Inc. Last year it was Atlantic Energy Services. Harrod said that NEEDCO wanted to have people attend the NLEC meeting that evening to give their business pitch and he suggested they come instead to the May 3rd meeting. Aney said that NEEDCO is not able to bid on the project that the town was given grant money for. NEEDCO probably got New London’s name from public documents announcing the winners of the grants and is trying to offer its services. He said that the company can come and make a pitch but it shouldn’t be pertaining to this specific project. Aney said that he would much rather use the committee’s time to talk about town outreach, etc. The committee members agreed they would rather not spend their time with a pitch for something they cannot participate in. Harrod said that Mark Vernon was the go-between with this company and wasn’t sure how that came to be. Aney said NEEDCO called Richard Lee (Public Works Director) initially and he told them to call the Energy Committee. When they did not get an immediate answer from the Energy Committee, they called Mr. Lee again, who, again, told them that he was not the one they needed to speak with and that they needed to talk to the Energy Committee. Aney said that they were being aggressive. Harrod said the message next time should be that NEEDCO is not eligible for EECBG but if they have any other ideas that would be helpful to the Town, the committee would be happy to hear them.

Stanley asked if PSNH has any ownership in businesses chosen to do work in this area. Aney said that it does not.

Bill Spear asked if there were any concerns that the Board of Selectmen would not accept the grant money. Stanley answered in the negative and said that it was mandatory for any gift that is given to the Town to be accepted formally by the Board of Selectmen after a public hearing. He added that if a gift compels the Town to spend money, they would have to go to Town Meeting to get approval but since the town meeting had already voted on the matching funds for this project, that would not be necessary.

5. Colby-Sawyer College Developments – Sauerwein said that the college has been working to buy cleaner energy and has a supplier who supplies such energy. Their method is to buy a portion of energy that is “dirty” on the market. They have a fixed rate for the next three years that was found to be cheaper than their current rates. They purchased clean energy on top of that to match what they had been paying previously. This should lower their carbon footprint from energy consumption by about 40%. Sauerwein felt that this was a big step forward for their

goal to lower the footprint of the college, overall. He said that they anticipate a big return on this investment. Aney asked if they were buying green energy from PSNH or a third party. Sauerwein thought they were buying carbon credits from PSNH. Aney said that it sounded like Renewable Energy Certificates. He thought that it would make a great story for a newspaper article. Harrod agreed and reminded Sauerwein that the last time he wrote an article it got a lot of attention. Sauerwein said that the Sustainability Coordinator at the college has been finding many ways to lower the carbon footprint of the campus, such as going paperless with some documentation, and that her ideas were permeating throughout the college. He said that the changes being made are motivating others on campus to make changes for the better, as well.

Spear said that subcommittees have been formed to study Sustainability in Learning and Incorporating Sustainability into the Curriculum. The college's Sustainability Coordinator is heading the latter subcommittee to see how they can blend it into different types of courses. They want to come up with a guidebook for best practices.

Sauerwein said they are presently working on their trash problem when the school year ends in May. He recalled in earlier meetings that an increase in trash is observed when sessions close for the summer and students who are moving out of the dorms throw out a large amount of trash as they prepare to leave. The committee has made some progress and is working to shorten the suggested list of "Things to Bring" that is given to incoming students. They have added a statement to the top of the list that says "Colby-Sawyer College Promotes Sustainability."

Sauerwein noted the use of "Micro-fridge" rentals at UNH, which were coordinated through a local hardware store. The store rented these appliances to students so that they were not all purchasing these same items and then discarding them a few years down the road. This was helpful for the hardware store, as it promoted buying local, and it promoted using greener appliances which the hardware store had in stock. A Micro-fridge combines a small microwave and a small refrigerator with only one outlet. Power is sent to only the appliance demanding energy, thus using less energy, overall.

Spear said he would be teaching a course in the fall on sustainability. Each year they will have students calculate the carbon footprint using the Clean Air - Cool Planet model. This will provide some inside information to help them see the progress they are making to minimize their carbon footprint.

Sauerwein noted that they carried out a maple sugaring project this year. They gathered sap and now have a sugar house on campus. He said that he was interested to learn that the old Colby Junior College used to sugar in this area many years ago.

6. Earth Hour – Mark Vernon was not present at the meeting, so this agenda item was postponed until the next meeting.

7. Strategic Agenda – Harrod passed out an email that Vernon had sent to him regarding the Energy Committee creating a strategic planning document. Harrod shared that it was his view that the Master Plan chapter would serve as their strategic planning document. He opined that the need to do something separate and distinct from the chapter was perhaps not warranted. Sauerwein suggested that they could perhaps incorporate Vernon's ideas into the Master Plan.

8. NLEC Position on Voting and Warrant Articles - Aney asked if the committee should take a stand on things such as warrant articles. Harrod said that if the warrant comes out and says that the Budget Committee and/or the Board of Selectmen recommend passing it, the Energy Committee should also be able to put its own stamp of approval on articles it favors. Sauerwein asked if it came to be that there was a divided view on an item, would the NLEC need a simple majority to decide its position on said item? Mike Meller said that if the committee can adopt a policy when it is unanimous, it should be able to speak in favor of it. If the view is divided the committee should not put its imprimatur on it. Stanley said that majority rules. If the committee votes on a simple majority basis, it may have to temper the language to explain it. He suggested simple majority, not a 2/3 majority or any other number. Sauerwein suggested using the term "supports" or "unanimously supports." Aney suggested checking with Ms. Levine on the rules they should abide by.

IT WAS MOVED (Jack Harrod) AND SECONDED (Mike Meller) to express the Energy Committee's position on articles using the terms "supports" for majority rules instances, or "unanimously supports" for unanimous agreement among the committee members. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Aney expressed an idea where if town residents asked to get a permit to install, for example, solar panels on their roof, that they could have the building permit fee (\$50) waived. He felt that this would show support regarding making clean and/or renewable energy choices. He said that the committee could request incorporating this idea into the policies of the Board of Selectmen. Stanley said that the Board of Selectmen were the ones who decide on the fees. Aney explained a rebate type of structure that gave discounts to new home builders who rated high on the Energy Efficiency/Energy Star scales. Those who do not want to build to those high energy ratings would have to pay higher rates. Stanley said that they would have to develop a structure that would work or find one that was nationally accepted to put this suggestion into action. Stanley observed that the new member of the Board of Selectmen feels that the building permits are currently too high.

Aney said that the Energy Committee can approve, by a majority or by unanimous consent, a motion that is put toward the Board of Selectmen or any other commissions or committees in the Town. Harrod said if the committee is originating the article itself, it would have to do sufficient homework to make sure the content is valid and necessary. To endorse an article, originating elsewhere, it can just vote its approval.

Stanley said that after recently going through the process of analyzing fees, comparing New London's fees with 20 towns in the area, he found it to be a lot of work and very time consuming. Aney said that he wanted to propose the request for granting a waiver of a building permit fee for the installation of solar hot water and solar photovoltaic equipment. He said it showed support for the installation of any renewable energy systems. Stanley cautioned that they could not waive the requirement for a 3rd party review. Aney said that he understood this and added that he would work on the wording for the definition of "renewable resource." Harrod said that anything like this must be submitted in writing. The committee agreed. Aney agreed to get his exact thoughts in writing for the committee to review. Harrod noted that he should be sure to reference what it is that they would be amending.

9. Other Business - Aney said there was going to be another RGGI grant round for the State of New Hampshire Greenhouse Gas Reduction Grants Funds. The types of projects to be funded were in three categories:

1. People who got funded last year would get "re-fueled" with additional funding.
2. Programs for affordable, energy efficient housing projects.
3. Programs to address the energy efficiency needs of large energy users, such as industry, and large commercial organizations.

Aney stressed that they are looking for programs this year instead of projects, as last year they had too many projects to review with a limited staff. He believed that Colby-Sawyer College had a good chance to win some funds as they had some opportunity to allocate funds in a "public interest" way. They could contribute to the students and alumni and the community. The hospital was also another possibility for the latter item. Aney noted that there was \$17.5 million dollars available.

Aney explained the difference between a program and a project. He gave an example of the Retail Marketing Association reaching out to businesses in the State. They would go to "Mom and Pop" retailers and ask them to let them do an audit to help them save money on energy costs. Aney explained that NHMEAP was another example of a program. Programs would aggregate and serve a segment of the market. He said it was a stretch to say that Colby-Sawyer College would serve as a program, but he said that the college has an umbrella or portfolio of needs. The campus program part would involve developing studies of energy efficiency, solid waste, etc. He said he would go through this in more detail at a later time.

New London Green Fair

Spear and Harris have met twice since the last meeting to make further plans for this fair to take place in October. Jake Danielle is a student who is helping to organize students at the College to help. Spear gave a PowerPoint slide presentation with details on their planning so far.

They hope to build on progress of the Green Open House that will be held the day before.

Harris noted that something that motivates people more than just the concept of being green is the economic side of it. They might want to focus this on the economics of being Green.

They would like to raffle off items, perhaps such as a Kindle and perhaps a composter or rain barrel.

Their proposed budget of \$2,000 will cover expenses for one tent and other equipment they will need. Twenty vendors will fit under one tent. They anticipate \$3,000 of income from the 20 vendors to cover this expense.

Spear asked if the Energy Committee was on board with this project. Everyone was enthusiastic about the planning thus far and wanted them to proceed.

Stanley said he would suggest contacting vendors now to get them involved and get their input.

Aney said that they could showcase a case study on Bruss Construction project at the library. He also said that he has a list of 50+ additional names who could be possible vendors.

Stanley said they have to go by specific procedures to have their own checking account to take in or pay out money. He stressed that they would have to follow the municipal budget process. He suggested talking to Carol Fraley to see what to do next. He also said that they couldn't take it in or spend anything until and unless it is approved by the Board of Selectmen. He added that only non-profits can use Town property. Aney said they should try to see if they could put this event on the Board of Selectmen's agenda for next week's meeting. He said that he would check with Ms. Levine.

Some of the items on their list of things to do included contacting the vendors and installers to get lists of places they had done work, putting these locations on a map they will create, contacting New Hampshire Sustainable Energy Association and getting their list of people to contact, contacting Energy Committees in the surrounding area, contacting places where energy saving things have been installed to see if they want to be on the map or in the open house, creating a GIS map, contacting people related to the transportation sector (automotive, bicycle dealers). Harris explained they would like to have one section just for homes, which would explain about low cost things that can be done, such as thermostat changes and power switches. Aney suggested asking Bob Walker from Button Up New Hampshire to participate. Harris said he would like to have "NH Saves" participate and bring a supply of lighting products to display and sell at the event. He said that he hasn't contacted Clean Air - Cool Planet. Aney assured Harris that Clean Air - Cool Planet would no doubt love to participate.

Stanley also thought that another non-profit entity might be able to co-sponsor the event and serve as the financial go-through for the fair. He suggested the Recreation Committee or Colby-Sawyer College as being other possible co-sponsors. Stanley explained that the Rec Committee has a large budget and a revolving fund that could possibly be used. He suggested talking to Ms. Levine.

Harris noted that he had spoken earlier of having Jim Rubens give a talk at the library about what is going on with the National Clean Energy Bill. He was given the dates of April 16th or May 25th. It was suggested to ask Mr. Rubens to give the talk on May 25th to allow time for advance publicity.

The date for the next NLEC meeting was set for Monday, May 3, at 7:00 p.m..

IT WAS MOVED (Mike Meller) AND SECONDED (Russ Aney) to adjourn the Energy Committee Meeting of April 12, 2010. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London

Reviewed by

Jack Harrod

Chairman

New London Energy Committee

