

## **Energy Committee Meeting Minutes of March 1, 2010**

**Members Present:** Jack Harrod (Chair), Dave Harris, Mark Vernon, Bob Crane, Peter Stanley (Zoning Administrator), Russell Aney, Dave Sauerwein, Bill Spear

**Members Absent:** Mike Meller, Joan Cobb, Frank Anzalone

Jack Harrod called the **MEETING TO ORDER at 7:00pm.**

### **Minutes of February 1, 2010 Meeting**

Harrod noted that Russ Aney had forwarded some minor revisions to the minutes of the meeting on February 1, 2010. Harrod said that he would incorporate Aney's revisions into the draft. No one had any problem with that and so a motion was made.

**IT WAS MOVED (Bob Crane) AND SECONDED (Mark Vernon) to accept the minutes of February 1, 2010 as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **Master Plan Schedule/Energy Chapter**

Harrod asked Aney how he was progressing with the Energy Chapter of the Master Plan, as it had not been completed as of yet. Aney said that he would be completing it that week and that only final edits were needed.

Mark Vernon suggested creating a summary of the Master Plan draft to use as an "energy matters" article. Harrod suggested that Vernon write a two-paragraph piece to send to the InterTown Record on the subject of Earth Hour, which he would talk about later on in the meeting. Vernon agreed to do so.

### **Municipal Energy Assistance Program (NHMEAP) Status**

Aney said that the NHMEAP process has not started yet and that he was still hoping for a volunteer intern from Colby-Sawyer College. He was looking forward to creating a project for a student who was interested in participating in the program. Bill Spear invited Aney to the next SIFE (Students In Free Enterprise) meeting the coming Thursday. Aney said he could make it and they hoped an intern could be identified at that time.

Aney explained that most of the data they need to start the process is already available at the Town Office. Other data can be extracted from the web. They will create an assessment of the carbon footprint of the buildings in Town. Software called a "Small Town Carbon Calculator" will help create a presentation on how the Town buildings are doing related to similar buildings in other small towns. This would encourage the Town to keep track of the municipal facilities energy consumption over the coming years. This will also help to set reasonable goals and reduce energy. Aney noted that he hasn't reached out to Laura Chesnut from Clean Air-Cool Planet recently and that he hasn't heard from her since January.

### **Energy Efficiency Community Block Grants (EECBG) Applications**

Aney noted that four grants were submitted on behalf of the Town of New London. One was for the Town of New London together with five participating partner towns in the Kearsarge school district, plus one letter of support from Warner (that town did not want to be included in this grant application because it had submitted a sufficient number of its own requests and felt if it was granted money on behalf of the Kearsarge Regional School District, it would put Warner over the maximum that any town is permitted to receive). The only other towns in the school district to submit grant applications were Bradford and New London. Bradford asked for about \$90,000 and New London's request was for about \$50,000.

Aney went on to explain that the three other applications for the Town of New London were:

1. Tracy Library: \$20,000 was applied for on behalf of Tracy Library to remove clapboards and insulate the walls within the oldest part of the building. They were not going to be able to replace the windows at this time. The project is going to cost between \$140,000 and \$150,000 to complete. Aney was sorry to say that he doubted they would receive any funding for this application. He noted that the EECBG seemed to be looking for energy savings that would accrue over a short period of time. This caused him to raise the issue that long-life projects were at a competitive disadvantage. The EECBG administrators were looking to invest money in projects that would create jobs and save energy in the short term.

Aney explained that the grant requirements contained criteria that affected New London. In the region New London is in, there is a category for building retrofits. Tracy Library was in competition for this money. Kearsarge Regional School District seemed to have a good score and was ten times better for the price of energy savings dollars in that category. Aney believed that \$335,000 was going to get funded for the school district upgrades and retrofits. This was using a three-year payback on the building retrofit. Buildings to be retrofitted were: the old Middle School, the High School, Sutton Elementary, Bradford Elementary, and Simmons Elementary. Aney opined that these were good projects and he was interested to see if the school district's warrant article would pass at Town Meeting. They won't know if they will be offered the grants until voting day.

2. Lighting: Aney said that Davis-Bacon legislation requires that the prevailing union wages be used for labor for any retrofits. Based on his discussion with the utility company, Aney learned that very few lighting retrofit projects were being submitted. He felt that New London would have a decent chance of winning funds. Aney explained that the labor component went up 70% due to Davis-Bacon's requirements. The cost of the materials stayed the same, but union wages have to be paid. He went on to say that this wasn't an issue with the library. On the lighting side, however, it was very noticeable. Aney summarized that the lighting project was about \$15,000. The Town's portion would be \$7,500. They wanted to ask for half of the Town's portion instead of asking for the full amount. The grant looked promising because the Town has matching funds available. Due to the labor increase, a \$15,000 project turned into a \$19,000 project. Therefore, they ended up putting in a request for \$9,000.
3. Elkins Study: Aney noted that elevations information was obtained from the dam site. Laurie Barg (sp?) from Community Hydro looked over some of the project. She concluded that there could very well be a community power opportunity at the lower dam, which has about a 12' drop in water elevation as well as a good flow of water. There was, however, no building close by to use to net meter the power. There is potential to sell the power in that area, but some new regulations need to be created regarding this possibility. Aney explained that the dam by the MESA building has a smaller drop; around 4' - 6' in elevation, which is not considered an optimum flow. He felt that there was an opportunity there and that power could potentially feed into the MESA building. Aney figured there could be 1-2 kilowatts available on a consistent basis, year round.

Aney explained that there would be costs in going forward with this project and that there were several different options. They could connect to a building without connecting to the grid. They could net meter the power. Or they could sell the power back to the electric company. For this project, they applied for grant money to fully evaluate the turbine options as well as to pay for the permitting and licensing operations. They asked for \$15,000. Aney added that this amount of money would be the tip of the iceberg if they decide to go forward with a full study. Permitting and licensing is the most expensive part of the process and could be up to six figures. He added that the State has no guidance, as they haven't done anything like this in the past. There have only been dam breaching projects but no dam retrofitting.

Aney said that the Head of the Dam Bureau was happy to work with the Town to find out what the impact might be for dams in the state that could potentially create energy. The bureau has agreed to help try to support New London and understands how to roadmap through this process. Aney noted that the grant included funds for some engineering and intern time to help do some of the analysis regarding what is necessary with the State and federal regulations to turn a dam into a power facility, whether they go forward with this project or not. Aney noted that this was a pilot program with implications for the entire state.

Aney added that he found a second bias regarding the EECBG -- the fact that the grant opportunities were based on the number of people affected. He opined that the project with the dam could possibly affect the whole state of NH. For applications to get funded, they essentially have to affect a very large town or a city.

Peter Stanley indicated that the Town had been approached by someone who wanted to purchase the MESA building. But the potential purchaser wants nothing to do with the dam, and would tear the building down. There would be months of permitting, as part of the building projects over the river. The people want to purchase the entire piece of land, including the red house and the vacant lot across the road. The idea was that this would be some level of commercial development, and the purchaser is willing to work with the Town. The idea of lowering energy costs by using power from the dam might be an attractive option.

Aney said that he had recently attended a Farm Energy Expo where he gave a talk about what is being done in New London. Unfortunately, renewable energy funding does not include new hydro of any size. There is currently advocacy in place to try to get people who own dams to get in touch with the legislature to encourage efforts to begin using hydro power. Aney added that the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance is interested in preserving dams as part of their heritage in the state. He noted that they may be able to win an LCHIP grant for preserving history in New Hampshire. This would require some political and funding support to make a go of it. Aney said that he spoke with Connie Reese, an abutter to the dam, who provided an amazing oral history of the area, and he learned a lot about Scytheville. He felt that this was a great opportunity to see what might be done to make something a win/win for everyone.

Harrod said that the Elkins dam project seemed to be at the bottom of the list last month, but now it seems to be a great idea for the coming decade. Aney said that there is a lot of wind that funnels off of Pleasant Lake and that there was possibly a wind turbine opportunity there that could also be looked into.

Aney said that the licensing and permitting for such projects is very costly, but the actual cost to create power from the renewable resources was not.

Stanley said that even though the permitting process is costly and lengthy, people are doing it nonetheless. He referred to Sturm Ruger, which uses two dams on the Sugar River. They power the mill building and possibly feed into the grid. Aney said it turns out to be much lower per kilowatt hour over the life of the equipment, outside of permitting and licensing. Harrod said that Canada is a great example of wide usage of hydro power. Aney agreed and said this was a great resource to get data for hydro power projects in New Hampshire.

Stanley said the Town has some experience with dam repair. First they had to remove trees and roots from the dam, and then they took the whole face of the dam, filled it with rebar and sprayed on concrete. It came out great and was not that expensive. He expects to have a similar repair done to the other dam. Richard Lee (Public Works Director) plans to take a similar approach. He noted that the State was not much help as they don't have a lot of experience with these types of things.

Aney said that he has testified in front of the New Hampshire House (Energy Science and Technology Committee) to ask for additional support for this subject. A Bill is going to go to the Senate so there may be an additional opportunity there. He said that he hasn't spoken to the State Representatives about this. Aney didn't feel as though new hydro laws would go through the legislature this year but thought it would be a good opportunity to create a coalition in favor of it. There is the opportunity to create some good, clean power, making use of some of the 2600 existing dams in the state.

### **Colby Sawyer Climate Action Plan**

Harrod said that he went to see the showing of "Kilowatt Ours" which was put on by some students from the college. He noted that there were 20-25 people in attendance and that it was an interesting documentary.

With regards to the Climate Action Plan, Dave Sauerwein said that there were a lot of things to work on. They have been taking a good look at the garbage that is hauled away from the college. The month of May contains the highest

amount because that is when students move out and leave a lot of items from their dorms, which need to be disposed of. They do lower the amount of waste by using agencies that come and pick up the unwanted things for others to use. Sauerwein said they need to study what is actually going into the dumpster.

Sauerwein said that there is a lot of pressboard that is going in there, which worries him. The most common furniture to be disposed of, made of pressboard, is bookcases. One way to deal with this problem would be to provide bookcases made of regular wood that are rented, instead of the students purchasing the pressboard variety. A student organization would do the labor of installing the bookcases and then they could keep the funds from the rentals.

Sauerwein also thought perhaps they could also send a shorter list to students advising them on what to bring to college. Currently, there is no statement that says “the less you bring, the better” but perhaps that should be indicated to the students. Sauerwein shared that sometimes parents call from stores and ask those working at the college if their students need tables, lamps, etc. He would like to do away with that sort of thing. Students and parents have good intentions but it is leading to a massive pile of garbage in May. Sauerwein said they want their students to take the garbage out and don’t want to discourage them from taking things to the dumpster rather than leaving them in the halls. They are trying to come up with some creative and comprehensive ways to deal with this problem. Sauerwein noted that one group has been formed to deal with the May trash, and that other groups will address the overall garbage.

### **Earth Hour, March 27**

Vernon said they have done something similar to this the past couple years. He would send a press release to department heads and the school district to explain the concept of not using any electricity for one hour, from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on March 27<sup>th</sup>. Harrod suggested having Jessie Levine send the press release to her email list, which contains a few hundred email addresses of people in Town who have asked to be included on Town news and information emails. Vernon said it would also go to the Kearsarge Shopper too. Harrod suggested adding this to the InterTown Record’s schedule of events. To get the word out to the students in the area schools, Vernon was given the contacts of Dan Noyes (facilities director) for Kearsarge Regional School District, or Robin Steiner, the Assistant Superintendent. Superintendent Jerry Frew was also a possibility.

### **Other Business:**

Spear said he and Dave Harris began with a grant process for applying for funds to help pay for the Green Fair they are planning for October, which was a four-page application. Applicants had to have a lot done and be ready to go with their projects; however they weren’t at that point yet. When he got to the last page of the application, he had to stop. Harris said that they’ll meet next week to get some details on the fair and will start by soliciting suppliers, vendors and consultants in the area who work in the energy saving industry. He noted they would have to come up with a fee to be a part of the fair. Harris said they want to find out who has anything related to energy (solar, wind, geo thermal, window quilts, conservation district for plantings vs. native grass) to begin making these calls and inviting people to vend.

The fair is slated for the first Sunday in October. From these vendors they hope to get a list of places they have installed energy-saving or alternative energy equipment, and talk to individuals. They want to be able to list on a map or offer open houses for people to go look at the energy upgrades and make it clear that these things can be done by anyone, not just a select group of people.

Aney said he would give Spear and Harris some suggestions for people to contact to get some vendors.

REPA (Residential Energy Performance Association) are building auditors who may be interested.

Build Green New Hampshire’s contact was Beth Fisher and Aney said that she would know who to contact for green builders in this area specifically. He shared that he would be attending a Green Building Show in Manchester that weekend and thought he may be able to recruit some people there.

Aney said they may try to set up tents for the fair and that it costs about \$1,000 for a large tent which could house 18 booths. Spear felt the event would be a great follow up on the previous day's event, which would include having open houses to look at homes in the area to see what they have done to use renewable energy.

It was noted that they would need to ask the Board of Selectmen for permission to use the Town common for the event.

Aney said the library could work in conjunction with the event. They could promote some of the resources they have that are energy-related. If they plan it right, they can draw from the whole Kearsarge area and not just New London.

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, April 5<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

**IT WAS MOVED (Russ Aney) AND SECONDED (Dave Sauerwein) to adjourn the meeting.  
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The **MEETING ADJOURNED** at 8:06pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary  
Town of New London

Reviewed by Jack Harrod

Chairman, NLEC