

New London Energy Committee

October 4, 2010

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jack Harrod, Dave Sauerwein, Mark Vernon, Bill Spear, Joan Cobb, and Peter Stanley. Margie Weathers joined at 7:17pm.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Russell Aney, Mike Meller, Dave Harris

Chairman Harrod called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

1. Minutes of September 13 meeting

Harrod asked if there were any amendments or changes to the draft minutes, which he had previously circulated to the members. There being none, he called for a motion.

IT WAS MOVED (Mark Vernon) AND SECONDED (Bill Spear) to approve the minutes of September 13, 2010, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. Master Plan Schedule/Energy Chapter

No update, as Russ Aney was not present.

3. Energy Efficiency Community Block Grants (EECBG)

No update, as Aney was not present.

4. NHMEAP Update

No update, as Aney was not present.

5. Colby-Sawyer College Developments

Sauerwein noted they had opened up a section of the field next to Colby-Sawyer College President Tom Galligan's house, and planted buckwheat. The Natural Sciences Department worked out an agreement to mow the field on a three-year rotation. Stanley thought a two-year rotation would be best because it was a small area. He cautioned that some areas could present problems after two years. If they have heavy machinery it wouldn't be a problem, but vegetation could grow higher than the ceiling which could not be handled with light equipment. At King Ridge they mow every three years but have heavy machinery. This rotation works best for wildlife support in that area.

Sauerwein said that sustainability is becoming widespread in many different places across campus. The mail room even now recycles notices to students alerting them to packages that are waiting for them, which can be plentiful in the beginning of the year.

Stanley asked if a text book could be available in an electronic format, such as for a Kindle. Spear said that they are available for many classes, but the electronic copies are only available for a short time before they expire. He noted that he creates a custom textbook without the hard cover and the glossy pages, which costs about half as much as a traditional text book. Stanley asked how much students spend on books. Sauerwein said it depended on the major, but it was expensive. He added that they do not have, like other college towns, competing book stores to drive prices down. Spear noted that he offered the choice of using electronic text books to one

class as a test case, but they decided they did not want to try. The students wanted to be able to highlight, and to have the physical book with them for ease of use.

Sauerwein said that in the orientation for new students they give a presentation on sustainability at the college. They hand out one CFL bulb to each student to help save on electricity use. They also have Jen White (the college's sustainability coordinator) participate in this event.

Sauerwein noted that in an earlier meeting the question was raised if it was better to have a CFL bulb when the light is turned off and on regularly. He followed up on this question and found that if they can at least get the students to turn things off, that is the focus. By doing this, they will get people to use less energy. Lights they are using mostly that necessitate being flipped on and off are ceiling lights, which will not be turned off and on as much as smaller lights. Sauerwein said that they recognize that there is a tradeoff between energy savings and having to dispose of the mercury from spent CFLs, but the recognition for students to learn to turn off lights in the long run is worth it.

Sauerwein explained that they have a new programming plan, where Jen White has collaborated with residential hall staff to create a "grab 'n go" program/packet to better enable them to fulfill the requirements of being residence hall staff members.

Harrod noted that Tom Galligan would be appearing before the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting that Saturday morning and that he (Harrod) planned to bring up the strides in sustainability that have been made by the college as of late and the college's close collaboration with the Energy Committee.

Spear said that the SIFE students put in for a \$1,000 grant for motion sensors. They will look at all the different areas on campus to see where the most power is used, and install the sensors there first. It is a start, but they may not be able to do more than about 10 switches with that amount of money.

Sauerwein said he went to UVM to see what they were doing with sustainability. They have motion-activated temperature settings. Room lights and temperature go on when people enter. Perhaps this is an opportunity for any new buildings Colby-Sawyer builds on campus.

Vernon wanted to know if the town offices had a power management system so computers would be "put to sleep" when not in use for a long period of time. Stanley said that they do not have such a system in the town, but are instructed to turn computers off at night. He said there is no policy in place to require employees to put computers into "sleep" mode when not in use during the day.

Spear said that his class started their 2009 calculations of the college's greenhouse gas inventory. The class looks at all forms of energy consumption and emissions, and calculates their carbon footprint. They learn about the areas and explore alternatives and create recommendations. They do this each year and make progress within their tiers of initiatives. The college is committed to have a carbon neutral footprint by 2050.

6. Encouraging the use of reusable shopping bags (Hannaford et al.)

Nick Ourusoff sent a proposed letter to Harrod and Vernon for review. Harrod thought they should address the company president simply as Ms. Campbell and not President Campbell. He commented that this letter would be signed by himself, on behalf of the New London Energy Committee. He wondered if the rest of the committee would agree with the idea of instituting a

nominal charge for plastic bags as one option in order to discourage people from taking too many of them. Spear said that as long as they put that money towards something worthwhile, such a fee would be appropriate. Cobb said that the Co-op does offer a five cent rebate for bags and they vote each year on what organization or charity to donate it to. The entire committee felt this idea was appropriate.

Harrod felt they should request a written response, not only in the form of a phone call. He thought an email or other written response would be best so it could be put into the record. Harrod agreed to write another draft of the letter and would submit it to Ourusoff and the rest of the committee for review. It would then be sent to Ms. Campbell.

Vernon asked what they would do if they do not hear back from Ms. Campbell. The committee thought that if she could respond by the next meeting, Nov. 1st that would be ideal.

Cobb said she went to Hubert's and talked to the clerk who gave her the name of the president of the company. He is very interested in recycling and she asked the committee if she had their permission to contact him about the use of reusable bags with regards to sustainability. Harrod said that it would be fine for her to go forward.

Weathers wondered why they weren't going to all the other stores and not just Hannaford and Hubert's. Harrod said that the committee had in fact discussed this in the past. It has been done in the past, with the blue cloth bags promoted in town last year, and maybe it could become a standard. Harrod asked Weathers to think of ways to present this idea to the business community. They saw the blue bags as a one-time thing, but maybe they could make it a permanent fixture.

7. Next meeting: Monday November 1

Harrod said that the next meeting would also conflict with the Board of Selectmen. The committee decided to keep the meeting as set, and to hold it in Peter Stanley's office.

8. Publicity/Outreach Event in November

Harrod said that Meller agreed to look into this idea. He has a date based on availability at the library, which is December 8th. He has been in touch with a couple of people from Vermont, who are experts on what people can do to make houses more energy efficient without spending thousands of dollars. Harrod thought it sounded like an informal session with available tips offered, and similar to last year's "Button Up" workshop. Weathers felt this sort of thing had been done too many times before. Harrod disagreed, but thought they first needed more details from Meller, who unfortunately was unable to attend the current committee meeting. Sauerwein asked if Jen White should be involved in this as well. Harrod said that it might be better for her to have her own session speaking on half of the college and its efforts at sustainability. Sauerwein thought a natural landscaping session in May would be appealing as well. Cobb is knowledgeable about the topic and is willing to give a talk.

Weathers suggested tying some holiday energy efficiency into the session on the 8th, to give tips on lighting and also what to do with Christmas trees when people are done with them. Vernon said he would work on getting the Energy Committee's name and logo posted around town as the sponsors of this event on the 8th, when the talk has been solidified, to help get their information out to the townspeople.

9. "Member Minutes"

Vernon suggested that at each committee meeting, each member should have a minute to talk about something that was important to him or her. He began with his own minute.

Vernon talked about transportation and bicycle racks and locations/styles of racks. His current plan is to install hitching posts in three areas in town, each of which would hold two bicycles. He wanted to ask the committee to support this installation of bicycle stands throughout the town.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Spear) AND SECONDED (Dave Sauerwein) to endorse the installation and locations of four bicycle hitching posts in two locations in New London, as per Mark Vernon's proposal at the October 4, 2010 Energy Committee meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Harrod wanted to note that both Ms. Levine and Mr. Lee had not been in favor of the racks in certain areas on the green due to possible mowing problems. Sauerwein noted that they have encountered the same concerns on campus and have found ways to get around the problems. Stanley suggested using crushed stone deep enough to preclude anything from growing up and around it.

Cobb had comments about the cessation of mowing and thought it was overdone. She didn't think it was necessary to mow so much on the green and on campus. In the fall, she thought grass should be able to grow and develop roots instead of being mowed, and turning brown. She thought the committee would naturally be interested in following up on these ideas. She said she could talk to Richard Lee about this, as he was usually open to her ideas.

Stanley noted that one reason for the mowing on the common is due to the amount of use it gets. Vernon thought the grass may stand up better if left longer. Stanley wasn't sure but said there were places around town, such as the transfer station, that were of no benefit to anyone by being mowed. These areas could just as well be replaced with wild flowers. Sauerwein thought they should analyze the different places around town and determine what sort of mowing or substitutions (plantings) could be made to cut down on mowing. Others at the meeting agreed with his thinking and thought it would be a good conversation to start.

Stanley said he encounters people all the time who are very resistant about giving up even a small piece of lawn. He explains to them why having a lawn, especially at the water's edge, is not ideal. He uses this kind of situation as an educational time for residents to show them the ground coverings that want to grow, naturally, versus grass that they have planted. It takes a lot to convince people.

10. Other business

Sauerwein asked if there was a method they could use to share information with people about not mowing their lawns at this time of year. Harrod said this could be a component at the natural landscaping session in the spring. Vernon suggested an article in the InterTown Record.

With no other business, Harrod called for a motion to adjourn.

IT WAS MOVED (Dave Sauerwein) AND SECONDED (Bill Spear) to adjourn the meeting of October 4, 2010. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London

Reviewed by Jack Harrod
Chairman, NLEC