

New London Energy Committee

April 11, 2011

Meeting Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jack Harrod (Chair), Peter Stanley (ex officio), Bill Spear, Mark Vernon, Russ Aney, Dave Sauerwein, Joan Cobb, Mike Meller.

OTHERS PRESENT: Larry Rupp and Allison Seward, residents of New London

MEMBERS ABSENT: Margie Weathers, Dave Harris

Minutes of March 7 Meeting

Harrod asked if there were any suggested amendments to the minutes of March 7, 2011, which he had previously circulated to the members of the Energy Committee. There were none.

IT WAS MOVED (Mark Vernon) AND SECONDED (Russ Aney) to approve the minutes from March 7, 2011, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Energy Efficiency Community Block Grants (EECBG) status (Elkins micro hydro and town lighting)

Russ Aney said that the grant for KRSD that New London had sponsored has been under way with Honeywell for about 8 weeks.

Harrod said that the winning applicant for the Elkins Micro-Hydro feasibility study was Jay Boeri. Aney noted that he had also applied for the work but did not win the bid. He didn't feel optimistic about there being an economical solution for micro-hydro in Elkins given current New Hampshire distributed generation and net-metering laws and regulations. One component of the grant when the town applied for it, as well as one of the reasons it was assumed the town won it, was to create a road map for the entire state, about how to implement micro-hydro in New Hampshire. Aney said he would encourage Boeri and those overseeing him to put a lot of emphasis on this aspect of the grant. Harrod noted that this was indeed something that was stressed to each of those who had applied. Stanley said one of the reasons Boeri had been considered a top candidate for the work was because he had carried out a similar project in the State of Vermont. Harrod said that the grant is intended only for a study, and while they don't necessarily expect there to be an economically viable option for Elkins, the study could still serve as a roadmap for others who may want to approach such a project elsewhere in New Hampshire. Aney encouraged the Energy Committee, with an oversight position, to write a letter to the state senate and house committees that are considering the findings and recommendations that will be generated by a study commissioned by SB323 in the last legislative session, that is looking at energy efficiency and renewable energy programs for the state of New Hampshire. Vermont Energy Investment Corporation was chosen as the lead consultant to perform the analysis and write the report, which is a year-long effort. Aney felt there was little analysis going on in that project regarding small and micro-hydro. He hoped that the Elkins report would not only help explain the challenges in regards to the development of small and micro-hydro in New Hampshire, but would also recognize opportunities for this untapped renewable energy resource in the state and gain respect for micro-hydro in Concord. He noted that small and micro hydro is not even considered a renewable energy source in the State of New Hampshire. The only state

funding available to small dam owners is a subsidy to help remove existing dams. Aney said he is very well versed on that side of the subject, and would love to help by transferring his knowledge concerning this. He expects to be transitioning out of the state by the end of the summer, and so would not be here to continue with this support himself.

Regarding the EECBG grant for lighting retrofits, Aney said that after they went through another walk-through with the auditors, they found the scope to be larger than once planned. The new scope had to be approved by the Board of Selectmen, which it was, and it was also “blessed” by PSNH, so the Town of New London can be assured to receive the same 50% offset as it had in the initial scope of work. The Board of Selectmen agreed to spend a bit more from the Building Maintenance fund to pay for this increase in scope. More than half the materials have arrived and the contractor expects to begin the installation in the next week or two when the remainder of the items arrives.

At the same Board of Selectmen meeting, Aney mentioned some streetlights that were unnecessary and should possibly be removed. Alternatively, the lights could be transferred to the accounts of the local residents who benefit from them. They also discussed two traffic lights, which the Town pays for. Aney said he asked Richard Lee, Public Works Director, what he does when a traffic light goes out. Mr. Lee said that he notifies the Police Department, which in turn notifies the NH DOT. NH DOT has been maintaining the fixtures to date at no cost to the Town of New London. The Town does still pay for the electricity, however. Aney said he received two quotes for either replacing the incandescent lamps with LED bulbs, or replacing the entire fixture. Doing either of these things would result in a \$500 savings/year. Aney said that when pricing the fixtures and/or the LED bulb, the actual lighting is actually cheaper than the cost for the bucket truck and labor that could be charged. Aney suggested that since there was lack of clarity as to why the Town was paying the electricity bills in the first place, he thought they should ask DOT to put up the fixture, and the town would continue to pay the electricity. Aney also noted that Mr. Lee knows of a local electrician who has done work for the Town previously, who would not charge the \$1,300/day fee that some contractors quoted for the bucket truck and labor, and who has the proper equipment to do the job. This was another option to consider.

Aney summarized that there were some things that needed to be decided, and that some additional research and options need to be explored: negotiating with DOT on the installation of the fixtures, the cost of LED retrofits vs. new fixtures, and possibly transferring the accounts to DOT. In two weeks, Aney hopes to have assembled the necessary information and to have had an opportunity to discuss the issue further with the Board of Selectmen.

NHMEAP update

Harrod indicated that earlier that evening at the Board of Selectmen’s meeting, the report on the town office building as part of the NHMEAP grant was supposed to have been presented but was not due to the fact that Chris Dundorf had not yet completed it. This has been delayed until the April 25th BOS meeting. Aney urged everyone to attend that meeting.

Aney said they did some follow-up work that day with a trainer from BPI. They looked at the ductwork and would recommended moving thermostats on the ground floor. Upstairs in the attic, air and duct sealing needed to be done, as well as additional insulation. The flue needs some work, and rigid foam insulation would be recommended for the foundation. The windows are tight, as is the elevator shaft.

Colby-Sawyer developments

Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE) made a presentation at a regional competition in New York City last week and is moving on to the nationals. A big part of the attention they received was for their sustainability endeavors.

He said his class's wind turbine survey was sent out the previous Friday afternoon, to a sampling from Ms. Levine's list of taxpayers who have asked for town news emails, and they anticipate receiving feedback within a couple of days. Just fewer than 200 surveys went out. Spear said that the survey would also be going out to students of Colby-Sawyer but the results would be kept separate, because student opinion could be biased due to the college's emphasis on sustainability. He reiterated that there has been no move to identify or even choose a site for a possible wind turbine. If this survey comes back as being favorable, they would move forward with a \$5,000 computer scan of the area to see where wind conditions might be best, and then three met (meteorological) towers, to be placed in the three best locations.

Aney said that a Doppler system might be preferable to met towers. It would require a shorter time period and while it would be about \$7,000/month, it would only need one or two months. The other idea would be to put a met tower up for a longer period of time. There exists a system which includes an anemometer at the top of a tower, which would shoot up sound waves to measure wind resource at different levels using triangulating sound beams. This is beneficial as it can use multiple altitudes. Still, the issue is that there probably won't be the wind resource in this area, or a suitable location to install a wind turbine or turbines. Regarding possible noise from a turbine, Harrod said that he has stood next to a large wind turbine in Worcester, and could hardly hear a sound. Spear said that he has recently been to see one that was also very quiet.

"Recycle-mania" on the CSC campus continues, which SIFE is managing again this year. Sauerwein added that the people from SODEXO are helping to haul the recyclables. Students for a Greener Campus initiated the "BYOM" program, which stands for "Bring Your Own Mug" that has helped to eliminate disposable beverage cups in the dining hall. They have also had a coat drive to provide coats to students from out of state who were not prepared for the New Hampshire weather. The remaining coats went to another area coat drive.

The Sustainability Coordinator position is being overwhelmed with more work than they had anticipated. They are looking to find how they can re-shape the position.

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

Cobb attended the viewing of the "Bag-It" documentary that was shown on the Colby-Sawyer campus. She said it was poorly attended. It would be on PBS on April 27th. Meller said that people get excited about reusable bags but don't really do anything about it. He said if people with reusable bags had a special area to park, it would encourage people use their own bags more often. Harrod thought that would be impossible to regulate that, and Meller thought it would have to be on a volunteer basis and perhaps Hannaford could be approached with the idea.

Cobb said she hadn't talked to the manager from Hannaford since the last meeting. She thought if they offered a five-cent discount per reusable bag, it would help.

Spear felt the preferred parking would be a good idea for those who used reusable shopping bags. Stanley said that it would be impossible to enforce. Others felt it could be run by the honor system. Cobb said she would invite the manager from Hannaford, Mr. Kenyon, to the next Energy Committee meeting.

Spear said his wife and daughter have purchased many reusable shopping bags and have stockpiled them. They plan to use them as gift bags.

Energy Award for Local Businesses

Aney said the question is whether to have a formal nomination process, or just an informal one among the committee members and move to a more formal process in the following years. Some felt an informal process would work best, but Sauerwein said that he would prefer a formal process. He felt that preparing and thinking about being sustainable is part of what the reward is based on. If they just give out an award without selection criteria, that is taking away one possibility for a business owner to re-think how he or she is running the business. Aney felt that part of this award is a case study. He has recently helped write an article for Valley Business Journal about what businesses have done in the energy field and how they went about it. Harrod suggested publishing an article in the Valley News. Aney said he cared about getting the announcement out to the local community. Options include putting an announcement in the Kearsarge Shopper and the InterTown Record

Harrod felt that the first time around, there is an obvious case that is visible and can grab attention. They should seize the opportunity and just get it done. Aney agreed that the one business they are talking about was a shoo-in. The owner is also putting a kiosk in his lobby to further publicize what he has done.

Spear wondered if there should be something added to the end of the initial award announcement about how to be considered for the following year. Aney said definitely, and said that applicants could work with the Energy Committee to make energy efficiency upgrades to their own businesses. There was a question about including residential nominees. Everyone thought it was a good idea but most didn't think they should start with both business and residential. Focusing on businesses is the immediate priority.

Aney said that heating fuel has gone up 50% over the last 18 months and is not expected to go down anytime soon. Propane has been worse than heating oil, which is odd; it is a byproduct of natural gas production, not oil production but unfortunately it follows the price of heating oil, its most frequent replacement in areas not served by natural gas pipelines.

When the owner of the one business the committee has been discussing is done getting all the grants and participating in all the programs for the solar photovoltaic system, he will be paying roughly 50 cents/watt. His return on investment will be extraordinary.

Aney thought he could work up a case study of the business and would distribute it before the next meeting. The winner could be announced at the May meeting of the Energy Committee.

"Member Minutes"

Harrod said he would use his minute to say farewell to Mark Vernon, who would be stepping down from the committee after this month. Vernon has contributed hugely to both the Street Light Committee and the Energy Committee. He was also responsible for the "No Idling" signs. Harrod asked if members thought the committee should continue on with a replacement vice-chairman. He asked the members to be prepared for the next meeting with their decision on whether a vice-chair was needed, and if so, nominations to the position.

Vernon said that he will still be around and wants to remain involved. His last act will be to put a "No-Idling" sign at the Police Department. He added that he has an extra sign if anyone wanted it. Sauerwein said he would be interested in having the sign posted outside of the Windy Hill

building on the CSC campus, where he has noticed parents idling while dropping off or picking up their children. Vernon thanked everyone and said he has enjoyed being on the committee.

Cobb said she was still interested in alternatives to mowing and the overuse of the gasoline motor. She would like to do something more with Colby-Sawyer with that question as well. She didn't know what organization or student group would be interested in taking this up as a project, but thought it a good start. She said that Richard Lee was interested and on board with this project. Aney wondered if the students could aid in the design of the area behind the town offices. Cobb said she did have a design she made up. Aney said that Mr. Lee would be headed over to the area with Round-Up in May, so she should talk with him sooner. She thought she would like help moving rocks and other labor. Aney thought they could make this into a community garden. The Garden Club, the Town and the Energy Committee could work together on this.

Meller said one thing he has been hammering on is that they have to make sure the community knows what the Energy Committee is doing. He sometimes feels as though they are meeting in secret. His point all along is that there is not enough publicity being given to what the committee is trying to accomplish.

Larry Rupp said he was there to talk about the possibility of doing a presentation on "peak oil", the decline in petroleum production, that he said has been doing for over 10 years. Meller said the committee has sponsored programs in the past, not so much with petroleum, but with windmills, "Button-Up" home energy savings, and nuclear power.

Sauerwein thanked Vernon for his service. He also said a nice program they are proud of at Colby-Sawyer, working with local resources, is having the sugarhouse on campus. Their business, fine arts, and graphic arts students are involved in putting out a product there. They made 55 gallons of syrup this year. They bottle and sell a few, and give a few bottles away as well. Stanley suggested that they put a nice logo on their buckets; it would look nicer than what is currently there (a blood-red "C"). Sauerwein thought that was a good idea.

Spear gave his minute to Rupp, who would be heard from later on.

Aney said that he has enjoyed working with Vernon in helping to develop the strategic plan that Vernon took the lead on.

Rupp explained his interest to the Energy Committee, using charts and other visual materials. Since 2000 he has been doing presentations on Peak Oil to various audiences. More about it can be found by searching online for Macgoun, usds. His information is 10 years old, but is still highly relevant. Macgoun was considered a pessimist but has now been found to be right; Science Magazine reported that non-OPEC oil has definitely peaked. Production and reserves are declining. His presentation describes how this has happened and how to make the community aware of it.

Rupp was asked what he wanted from the Energy Committee. He said that he wanted to know if the committee is interested in sponsoring a presentation on the topic.

Spear felt it is an interesting topic. In 1956 a geologist named Hubert presented this to Shell, and came within one year of predicting the US peak.

Meller said he used to work for Exxon and is familiar with this information and felt it has been generally known for some time. He felt that what Rupp has said so far is already known by the

“sophisticated people of New London”. What he would be interested in, as well as others, would be “what can be done for our future?” Rupp said that there are several towns that have a transition movement going, which aims for lower usage of fossil fuels (Ms. Seward cited Keene as one). Sauerwein thought that would be a good route to take. He didn’t know if people recognized the concept of peak oil, but they know that energy is not going to get cheaper as they move forward. What actions to take is an important step in this. He supported the thought, but didn’t necessarily feel a presentation was the way to go.

Meller said any type of energy production has its downside: oil spills, coal mining accidents, etc. Harrod agreed and noted the nuclear tragedy in Japan due to the recent earthquake and tsunami.

Aney could see complementing what Rupp does with some additional transitional slides regarding energy consumption of the average household, and how it could be reduced. One could show conservation codes, and have a local energy auditor talk about sample projects that have been done for clients to make them more energy efficient. Show local examples and specify steps to take. One could also reference some good books and documentaries on the topic.

Next Meeting: Monday, May 2

Harrod said that they will have to meet in Peter Stanley’s office again, as the selectmen will be meeting in the Syd Crook conference room each Monday until further notice.

Other business

None

**IT WAS MOVED (Dave Sauerwein) AND SECONDED (Mark Vernon) to adjourn the Energy Committee Meeting of April 11, 2011.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:16pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London

Reviewed by Jack Harrod
Chairman, NLEC