

New London Energy Committee

November 4, 2010

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jack Harrod, Dave Sauerwein, Mark Vernon, Bill Spear, Joan Cobb, Peter Stanley, Margie Weathers, Russell Aney

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Meller, Dave Harris

OTHERS PRESENT: Nick Ourusoff

Chair Harrod called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

1. Minutes of October 4, 2010 meeting

Harrod asked if there were any amendments for the minutes, which he had previously passed around to the members.

Vernon noted that it should be written that he signed up for three bike racks, not four.

Cobb said that at item #6, the Co-Op does not charge five cents per bag; they give a nickel discount for using a reusable bag.

IT WAS MOVED (Dave Sauerwein) AND SECONDED (Mark Vernon) to approve the minutes of October 4, 2010, as amended.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. Master Plan Schedule/Energy Chapter

Aney said that the status remains the same. He plans to have it done by Thanksgiving and will distribute it to committee members for review.

Stanley noted that Town Planner Ken McWilliams has taken a full-time position in the town of Alton and will be done with New London beginning in January. The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) will work with the Town on completing the ten-year Master Plan. The Town may have someone from the RPC review where the draft Master Plan is to date and the RPC will be tweaking things as the planning process moves forward.

Aney proposed that committee members should review and digest the new Energy Chapter and take an extended period of time at the next monthly NLEC meeting to talk about it as a component of the overall strategy and how it relates to the strategic view that Vernon and others developed. They should identify gaps and areas that need to be closed up or attended to by the Energy Committee. Aney suggested allocating 30 minutes to this task. Harrod thought they should allot just 20 minutes. Aney thought everyone should provide critical feedback on the chapter and improve upon it.

Stanley commented that the biggest thing with the Energy Chapter is how it effects the Land Use Chapter, which is the last and final chapter that gets to the critical recommendations on what to do and how they foresee the development or conservation of the land in New London. Aney said that from an energy perspective, they didn't really address this notion in the first draft of the chapter. He would try to plug some more of these key points into the newest draft.

3. Energy Efficiency Community Block Grants (EECBG)

Aney said that this has been one of the most awful processes the Town has been through with regard to the effect of how the use of Federal funds restricts how things are done. It has also caused a lot of pure chaos for the school district. The school aid was augmented by ARRA (stimulus) funds. Everything has to comply with the provisions set by the ARRA, which has proven to be cumbersome.

Aney said that they are still trying to get the lighting contractor to do the lighting upgrades for the Town. Contracts are in place, and they may have received the deposit now to get the work going. There has been a delay of almost a year to get the work started.

Aney noted that he was not able to write the hydroelectric study RFP, as he may be bidding on the project himself. Shelley Hadfield, grant administrator, is helping Jessie Levine and is writing the RFP. She will review the RFP with Stanley, Levine and himself (Aney) to make sure it is consistent. That should go out fairly shortly and they hope to see some progress on that front.

4. NHMEAP Update

Aney heard from the MEAP people at the end of the previous week. They apologized for taking two months longer than was anticipated to visit the town. When he last spoke with them in July they said they would be by in August and never did show up. They wanted to stop sometime that week or perhaps the next to look at the town and some of the project opportunities. Aney explained that this was the follow-up to the energy analysis. They will perform a decision-grade audit, where they will scientifically assess the energy efficiency of one building, soup to nuts. They will identify the best opportunities for saving energy but will not necessarily provide the financial analysis associated with determining what it will cost and the actual value of the savings. The Town will have to chip in 10% of the approximately fee associated with this, up to \$500. Aney added that included with this service, the Town will have 22 consulting hours available at no cost.

Aney said that he had asked the folks from NHMEAP if, since the town buildings were not in the worst shape, they could possibly do some community renewable feasibility studies or look at implementing solar hot water at the fire station. They said that they would do this if the Town wanted that to be done. Aney thought that it might be more cost effective and better to make a decision grade audit. He talked to Chief Lyon over the weekend about putting solar hot water on the fire station. The Chief said that they don't have much of a thermal load for hot water in the summer. Radiant heat is used in the winter and they don't use much water except for washing the trucks. Therefore, Aney wasn't sure that solar hot water was a good application for any of the town buildings. Lyon suggested doing some work with the old building at the Department of Public Works. Aney added that working on Whipple Hall would be nice, but the entire building is not being used on a regular basis, so the energy savings would not be significant. Weathers asked why they would not consider using solar at the Town Office building. Aney said that it was initially supposed to be a detailed audit of one of the buildings. They should try to exhaust that option first. It was noted as well, that there was not much of a demand for hot water in the town offices, as there are no kitchen or shower facilities.

Aney said he would like to get a current read on who is using Whipple Hall and if there were any tenants coming into the building soon. Stanley said there weren't any upcoming changes that he was aware of. Aney said that perhaps there was more work and further improvements that could be made at the library.

5. Colby-Sawyer College Developments

Harrod said that he has had some emails from President Galligan's office, which is trying to get people together from the Town, the hospital and the Energy Committee to talk about a possible wind turbine. There is no set date for the meeting as of yet [subsequently, the date was set as December 13]. Sauerwein said that a good discussion was started on this topic by one of Spear's students.

Spear said that a student of his, Jake, debated the Cape Wind project as a way of looking at the advantages and disadvantages of wind power, and it was a great learning opportunity. Jake is the president of SIFE, (Students In Free Enterprise), and shortly after the debate, approached Spear before one of the SIFE meetings. He wondered what they had to do to start moving forward with wind power. It was known that the president of the college was in favor of wind power and wanted to move forward with it someday. The student asked if he should go see the president, himself. Spear told him that due to the funding issues, going to the president first would be a good place to start. He told the student that he needed to find out if he would have permission to look into wind power. Jake went and met with President Galligan and they decided the college couldn't move forward alone. They would need to talk to the Treasurer, the Dean of Students, and others. A meeting was convened the next morning. Spear felt this showed how clearly the faculty and president listen to their students. At the meeting they agreed that this was something for which they'd need the involvement of the entire community.

There are height and land use restrictions involved, said Stanley. He added that once they get past 100KW for net metering, effects of scale become huge. If they are looking at it from a cost effectiveness standpoint, they have to look at someone donating the turbine to the college, as they can cost upwards of 4 to 5 million dollars each.

Spear said they want to make sure they have buy-in with the whole community. They want to make sure it is something that everyone wants. If everyone is on board, they will start with taking measurements for a year, and will work on easements and site work. There is no requirement that the turbine must be located on campus, and they will think about putting it anywhere in town where it would be acceptable. Weathers asked if easements could be forgiven. Sauerwein said they could be. People could relinquish their easements.

Ourusoff asked if the shopping center was considered a stakeholder. Sauerwein said they were going to be invited, as they are major power consumers. Aney said he has spoken with the property manager of the shopping center and he is in favor of renewable power. Stanley noted that KIMCO was the actual owner of the center. Vernon said that they have tried in the past to communicate with KIMCO and the firm has been unresponsive. He said that there is a sense that they have larger plans and that the town of New London is nothing more than a line in the ledger book to them. Spear said that the hospital would perhaps go in with them and be part of the steering committee. Their idea is to get everyone involved as soon as possible so that people will feel part of the decision-making process.

Stanley said that some locations will work for a turbine and some will not. The center of town, and flat terrain were two examples of the latter. There has been testing done to prove this. That said, he thought it was a mistake to want to do it just for the sake of doing it; they really need to start by evaluating whether it makes any sense at all given the topography and the prevailing winds. Morgan Hill or King Hill would be possible options. They will need some scale; 10 or 12 turbines to make it work. They shouldn't rule out doing a series of smaller projects in the 100KW range to see if that makes more sense. They could share the energy savings with others who invest in the project. Stanley said that State land is an option for turbine placement as well.

Stanley said that Morgan Hill is the highest point, by far. They would have to convince people like the Webb family and the State of New Hampshire. The top of the hill is State-owned land. DRED may partner with them on this.

Aney noted that there was a natural funnel created by the Pleasant Lake valley which moves from Slope 'n Shore in the west to Elkins Village in the east. The open water creates no obstruction so the wind picks up speed and could be one option. Stanley didn't think it would generate as much power as other locations.

Stanley asked if the college ever looked into any solar electric fields. Sauerwein had an interested person who would work with investors to see if they could put panels on top of buildings but they couldn't align with grant requests and needs, and what the college could do at that point. Harrod said that they could put the panels in a field and not necessarily on a building. Stanley felt there were some good opportunities for this at the college. Sauerwein said providing electricity as well as an educational opportunity was what the college was looking forward to.

Alice Sprickman had sent an email about recycling printer cartridges and cell phones on campus to Harrod, which he had forwarded to the other committee members. Sauerwein said he wasn't sure students were aware of the cartridge recycling, but noted that the college recycles them in their offices, as well as electronic devices. They don't have a lot of cell-phones that are college owned so they don't have a program for that. He wasn't aware of such a program for the students and said he would follow up on it.

Spear noted that SIFE is also working on putting together a thrift shop to try to reuse furniture and other things that are left behind at the end of the school year. The international students are interested in this option, so that they can purchase such things at a lower cost, and because they cannot bring these items from home. Sauerwein said that international students are also not allowed to get a job but are allowed to work at an on-campus entity, such as this thrift shop. He noted that Colby-Sawyer has 52 international students this year.

Sauerwein said that the college's Sustainability Coordinator (Jennifer White) may be in touch with people regarding having public bikes that could be used by Colby-Sawyer College students and possibly community members. They would all be painted the same color and could be rented.

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

Harrod said that he received an interim response from Hannaford regarding the letter the Energy Committee and Oursuff drafted about the use of reusable shopping bags at their store in New London. Harrod sent a note back to the person who responded, letting him know that he would report back to the Energy Committee that they had received the letter. He has yet to hear back from the representative at Hannaford and if he doesn't hear back from him by the end of the week, he will send another email to see if there has been any progress.

Weathers said she has tried to come up with a way to get other businesses involved in having people use reusable bags. She thought they could have the associates wear a button to ask the consumer "do you really need that bag?" to make people think about it. Harrod liked having the merchants give a discount when the reusable bags are used. Weathers felt this was more about getting people to remember to bring their own bags. The other idea was that customers could get a card punched whenever they buy something "Green" or if they remember to bring their reusable bags. They can earn a discount or a gift for getting their cards punched so many times.

Ourusoff noted that it is all about packaging. If they look at the cost of packaging without any environmental costs, it is a significant portion of the product.

Vernon wondered if they could do something like bag sharing. If people forget their bags they could borrow them.

Harrod said that they could sell the reusable bags at a greater discount, or to give a discount at the register for using reusable bags. Weathers said the Kearsarge Co-Op's plastic bags are biodegradable. Harrod said that the produce bags used at Hannaford are either biodegradable or "green" and made of recycled material.

Harrod said he thought town merchants should go back to promoting the reusable blue bags that were offered last year, and making the promotion permanent. Sauerwein said they should share the information about some businesses using biodegradable bags with other merchants, who may also decide to do the same.

7. December 8th Event

Meller told Harrod that he thought this would be a lively discussion about weatherizing homes for the winter. Harrod said that it sounded like the Button-Up presentation last December without all the bells and whistles. The Energy Committee will sponsor this and Meller may be willing to pay for the advertising in the Kearsarge Shopper. If not, the Energy Committee would pay for it.

Aney wondered if they should be doing more to encourage speakers to discuss more topics and who would want to raise their hands to take on that responsibility. Harrod said that this is how the December 8th event all came about. Meller volunteered to put this together. Harrod said they hope to do something in the spring about landscaping. Aney suggested having something in the middle of the winter when people are getting their heating bills and may be more inclined to find out what they can do to lower them. He wasn't sure what the topic would be but would brainstorm some ideas and suggest some candidates. He noted the Carbon Coalition has a list of 25 people who will come and speak for free. Cobb said she was one of the speakers. Harrod said the idea is to have something every few months to let people know that the Energy Committee is still here and working on things. He suggested having someone from Hannaford come give a talk about packaging and being environmentally sensitive, depending on the response they get from the company regarding the reusable bags.

Aney said that Senate Bill 323 (SB323) that was passed during the last session called for a study and review of the state's energy policy and the role that public utilities should play in administering various programs. The competitive bid for a consultant to lead that on behalf of the Public Utilities Commission and Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Energy Board was announced the previous week. It is going to run by the Vermont Energy Efficiency Corporation (VEEC), which has a consulting arm, and has actually helped the EESE board in the past. He was wondering if they should have their own little town meeting to set up a debate about sharing ideas and opinions about the state's energy policy. He wished to get feedback on how they can they achieve the governor's goals for the climate action program and New London's Master Plan objectives. Aney thought he could put together an interesting panel discussion on that which could engage citizens and students at Colby-Sawyer College. They could perhaps feed this information back in to the findings and discovery process of the VEEC as they assess what is going on in New Hampshire, and see how satisfied, as citizens, they are.

Harrod said that he was glad to hear ideas for doing things through the Energy Committee.

8. "Member Minutes"

Harrod said that he was at the transfer station about 10 days ago and saw one of the police officers there with his cruiser's engine running. He went to the officer, pointed out the "no idling" sign, and suggested he stop idling. Harrod was told that the policeman had to keep the engine running to keep the computer going. Harrod remarked that he thought Chief Seastrand was going to see about getting a second battery for the police vehicles to keep the equipment running when the car was turned off. The officer told him that the batteries did not work very well. He wondered if the "no idling" policy was being observed by others, as it apparently wasn't being observed by the town's police department.

Stanley said he could tell committee members, from someone whose career used to depend heavily on operating machinery, that when there was a fire call they didn't shut their engine off for any reason. Harrod understood the need to idle while being at an emergency. Stanley said that leaving the engine on gets them in the habit to keep it going so that if an emergency arose, they would be prepared and would be in no danger of having the machinery (or vehicle) stop working.

Spear said that he wondered about the idea of branding some of what it is they are trying to do. The bag idea made him start thinking about it. He wondered if there was some simple campaign they could do to start the movement towards being green, perhaps using bumper stickers saying "New London is Going Green". He felt this supported Vernon's plan and gets people to think about it. Harrod suggested putting these types of slogans on the reusable shopping bags. Weathers said that she agreed with Spear and thought there were a lot of committees in town that the townspeople were not aware of. It would be good to let people know that they were out there.

Sauerwein said the "Walk the Talk" program at Colby-Sawyer College has this kind of element to it and students are responding well. By doing this, they are getting more discussions going about being green.

Cobb said she wants to help find out what the businesses in town are doing with regards to the reusable bags.

Aney reported that very soon the PUC was going to release its commercial rebate applications for commercial hot water and PV. It will be \$1 per watt up to 50KW and for the solar hot water it will be \$.70 for each KBTU produced. This is the first time rebates will be available for commercial use. He noted that the residential program had been shut down due to a lack of funding. They are also having a meeting the following Thursday to talk about a larger RFP for industrial or larger sized projects than commercial projects. They have about \$1 million to give away.

Vernon said they talked about energy consumption of office equipment at the last meeting. He wanted to ask if they could review the draft policy, which is piloted from the State of New Hampshire and give him feedback. It was his hope that they could vote it in during the December meeting.

9. Next Meeting

Monday December 6th was agreed to for the next scheduled meeting.

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

IT WAS MOVED (Dave Sauerwein) AND SECONDED (Russ Aney) to adjourn the meeting of November 1, 2010. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 8:02pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London

Reviewed by Jack Harrod
Chairman, New London Energy Committee