

New London Energy Committee
September 12, 2011, 7:00pm
Meeting Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jack Harrod (Chair), Dave Sauerwein, Peter Stanley, Alison Seward, Brian Armentrout, Mike Meller, Bill Spear, Joan Cobb (arrived at 7:08),

MEMBERS ABSENT: Margie Weathers, Dave Harris

Harrod called the meeting to order at 7:04pm. He noted that the new members, Alison Seward and Brian Armentrout, had been officially appointed by the Board of Selectmen to the Energy Committee. He also noted that Russell Aney had recently left New London and felt that Aney's departure posed a loss to the committee, as Aney was very active and knowledgeable in the subject matter. With Aney's departure and the new members joining the committee, Harrod felt that the committee was approaching an exciting turning point.

1. Minutes of July 11, 2011 Meeting

Harrod asked if there were any suggested amendments to the draft minutes of July 11, 2011, which he had circulated to the members of the Energy Committee. There were none, so he called for a motion to accept.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Spear) AND SECONDED (Dave Sauerwein) to approve the minutes from July 11, 2011 as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

Harrod said that the lighting retrofit has been completed. Stanley said the micro-hydro project is a bit behind schedule and they don't have a report back yet with a determination of exactly when it will be done. The engineer, Jay Boeri, has done the research and has preliminarily determined that the output would be 30HP and 20 KW. Without a FERC license, which is hard to obtain, the power could be used if the Town decided to build some sort of structure in that area or if they could find a third party to take the power so it was off the grid.

3. Colby-Sawyer developments, if any (summer vacation)

Sauerwein said that the college is in session and they are at a record attendance with 476 new students and a total of about 1,200 students. He noted that the college is working with Casella to use single-stream recycling even though the Town Selectboard had recently voted the idea down.

Spear said that the SIFE (Students In Free Enterprise) program has started up again and that they had their activities fair that very night with a promising number of students signing up to get involved. The group lost several people to graduation last year and Spear opined that the group would have some large shoes to fill. The group will have its first meeting on Wednesday and he anticipated that they would be promoting single-stream recycling throughout the campus. Stanley wondered if the college would be tracking the single-stream recycling as it may be a good example for the town about its success and/or ease of use. Sauerwein said that this would surely be done and the college would no doubt be happy to share this information with the Town. He added that sustainability is a major focus in the college and it isn't just the Sustainability Coordinator (Jennifer White) who is involved in promoting it, but everyone throughout the college has a hand and responsibility in sustainability.

Sauerwein said that student retention rates have gone down in the recent past, but after creating a retention committee, the college has seen the numbers go up recently. Stanley said that the demographics for the college don't look good for the long term, yet it is having no trouble drawing students. Sauerwein said that more people than ever want to come to Colby-Sawyer. Housing is an issue and there are actually some students who are living with the President as there aren't enough rooms available. They anticipate some students will leave over the next month or so to allow for more room. The college has purchased four houses in town for students to reside in. Stanley said that this is an issue, in that the college has not

communicated the use of these houses for student housing to the Town and that there would need to be some discussion on it at a later date.

Spear hoped that SIFE would continue working on the wind turbine project. He noted that the advisors of the group try not to influence the team too much, but are there to try and help the students solve problems. They may, in this case, recommend that the wind turbine project continue. Harrod said that the Energy Committee would be interested in it continuing since the committee was involved in it heretofore. Spear agreed to pass this sentiment along.

4. Encouraging the use of reusable shopping bags (Hannaford et al.); meeting with Nate Kenyon (and mention in the Intertown by Merry Armentrout)

Harrod said there was a good discussion at the last meeting with Mr. Kenyon from Hannaford regarding reusable shopping bags. Ms. Armentrout had put a paragraph into her InterTown Record column regarding the use of reusable bags as well. It was felt by many on the Energy Committee that Kenyon was in favor of using reusable bags and had ideas on how to progress with the use them, but also felt that he was fairly constrained as to what he could/could not do because of Hannaford's overall management.

Meller (who had not been present for the meeting with Kenyon) asked about his idea about giving better parking spaces to those shoppers who use reusable bags. Harrod said that the issue came up briefly but it was determined that such a thing would be too difficult to police.

Cobb said that she went to speak to Bernie, the manager at Huberts and was told that Weathers had already spoken to him about reusable bags. Weathers was not present at the meeting to give an update.

5. August 10 meeting with Congressman Bass and state Senator Odell

Harrod was recently contacted by Roger Stephenson from Clean Air – Cool Planet to see if he would be willing to participate in a meeting with Congressman Charles Bass and other Energy Committee members from New Hampshire, which would be held in Sunapee. Harrod agreed to join the group, which consisted of six different towns. Both Congressman Bass and state Senator Bob Odell were present. The purpose of the meeting was twofold: to get Congressman Bass to consider eliminating or reducing tax breaks and subsidies for oil/gas companies with regard to overhauling the tax code, and to explain the value of state and Federal grant monies to local towns and energy committees to study the feasibility of doing energy-efficiency projects, such as lighting retrofits, etc. Harrod did not see that Bass was swayed on either issue, but noticed that Senator Odell took copious notes and voted last week to not take the state out of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

Harrod said it was good to talk to some of the other Energy Committee people from around the state. He remarked that Temple, NH received an EECBG grant for \$350,000 and the town was doing quite a bit of work with it.

6. Streetlights revisited?

Harrod said that although Aney had been pushing for the streetlight audit to be repeated, he was reluctant to revisit the topic. He was part of the original committee to study the streetlights, which was done about five years ago. That study had ended up eliminating about a third of the streetlights in town and upgrading the others to more energy-efficient bulbs. The result had been vetted with the Town police and fire chiefs. Aney had pointed out that next year PSNH would be routinely going around to each streetlight to service them and it would be a good time to determine which other lights could be eliminated. Sauerwein agreed with Harrod that the earlier study did not need to be repeated. Harrod said he would opt to talk to the Town and PSNH when the time came for the servicing, to keep in mind whether or not they needed certain lights removed in town.

7. New members (Brian Armentrout and Alison Seward appointed)

Harrod said that the Board of Selectmen had officially appointed the two new members. He noted that there are no fixed terms and that because they are a committee formed by Town Meeting in 2007 and not a commission under state law, they have more flexibility in their group dynamics and activities.

8. New Vice Chairman? (Or Chairman for that matter...)

Meller felt the burden was on the chairman and didn't feel that the vice chairman (vacant since Mark Vernon resigned) had much responsibility that was different from any other member of the committee. Spear asked if Harrod would like a vice chairman. Harrod said that in his absence, it would be good to have someone to step in officially. Seward said that if Harrod wanted to continue, he should. Sauerwein suggested Spear as vice chairman and a motion was made:

IT WAS MOVED (Mike Meller) AND SECONDED (Dave Sauerwein) to elect Bill Spear as vice chairman of the Energy Committee. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Mike Meller) AND SECONDED (Dave Sauerwein) to re-appoint Jack Harrod as chairman of the Energy Committee. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Agenda for fall/winter

Armentrout noted that Portsmouth is doing a Green Business Alliance Program which encourages businesses to become part of a "green" alliance by meeting certain benchmarks. He thought bringing a fragment of this into New London, by requiring a few things of businesses, would work. The committee could create an application and a list of which businesses it would like to target. If the business makes it into the alliance it would get a sticker for its door and a certificate to post in its business. Armentrout opined that this program would enable people and businesses to be part of something and that it would be good for those who may not be able to afford something like a \$40,000 solar panel upgrade.

It was noted that Tom Mills from the Flying Goose Brew-Pub had won the Energy Committee's first sustainable business award earlier this year and that the committee had discussed coming together again to talk about future award winners to determine under what criteria they would be chosen. This fit perfectly into the Green Business plan.

Seward asked if they needed to present these ideas to the Board of Selectmen or if the Energy Committee had the ability to go forward on its own. Harrod said that the committee can go forward on its own. Seward asked if the Board of Selectmen had any issues that it wanted the Energy Committee to advise on at this point. Harrod said he has asked the Board of Selectmen about this in the past but has found that the Selectmen have a lot on their agenda of greater urgency and this wasn't at the top of their list. It was felt among the committee that the Board of Selectmen do a great amount of work and spend a great deal of time on the Town's issues and problems, and the committee could be helpful by using its own initiative and not burdening the Selectboard with more issues to consider.

Sauerwein asked if there were other ways the town and college could partner in the future. Stanley suggested the college study water conservation, which would help the town conserve electrical power and would save the college money on sewer bills. Things like low-flow shower heads or toilets would be good to consider if not done already. Sauerwein said he would look into this. He knew it had been discussed in the past. Spear said that the water consumption is tracked because they have it calculated into their greenhouse emissions program.

Stanley noted that there is an increasing number of geo-thermal residential installations around town. Some anecdotal information from the property owners could be beneficial to others who may be considering or are just curious about geo-thermal installations. People could find out how much it costs to install, what the returns are, and any problems that may have been encountered. Harrod thought that that topic might be too specific but there could be a program on alternative heating methods, including solar, wood pellets, and geo-thermal.

Sauerwein said whenever people move to town, the Town could possibly provide them with information about how best to "button-up" their homes for energy conservation. Harrod said that the library has DVDs of the "Button-Up" program that the committee sponsored a couple of years ago, which could be referenced or suggested to new residents.

10. "Member Minutes"

Seward was interested in planning an energy fair in the spring. She also wondered if the Energy Committee could have a booth at Market on the Green next summer to hand out information about energy conservation and related topics. Harrod indicated that there had been two main problems while planning the fair: time, and not having a non-profit organization that could handle the money that would come in and go out. If the organizers could find a willing non-profit to accept and expend the money for them, that could work well. It had been determined that state law severely restricted the ability of the Energy Committee to handle funds for an event like this.

Meller thought the committee should sponsor a program on nuclear power at some point.

Sauerwein explained that he has just begun a doctoral program and has asked for a leave of absence from the committee. Someone at the college is interested in being the liaison from the college but it isn't official yet. He would like to come back in three years, when he has completed the doctoral program. Harrod said that on behalf of the committee, he and the other members wish him well and much success. Sauerwein will be in touch with Harrod to arrange for his replacement to attend future meetings.

Cobb said that her daughter donated her time to weed-whack the first section of the experimental wildflower (natural gardening) garden at the entrance to the Town transfer station. She noted that upon discovering a large hornet's nest, it was determined that the rest of the garden would be weed-whacked after colder weather had arrived. Cobb added that she would rototill the first third and re-seed it this fall. She may submit a modest bill to the Town for the rototilling. Cobb said she believes that not mowing that area is a good idea and knows it is saving the town money. She would like to give a talk on the garden at some point and hopes someone with the same interest will join the committee.

Stanley said that he visited three different hydro installations while on vacation in Scotland. They were locally owned and operated. There was not a lot of flow but there was a huge head; 300 meters or better. Two of the three were put in with private money from individuals who owned the land and one was a consortium that put it in. Each involved a long pipeline over difficult land. Stanley said he saw a three-legged hydro scheme that drew from four different hills. The highest flow leg taped into a dam went uphill to about 100 meters above the point the water enters, and utilized a siphon effect to draw the water to that height to provide more head than was naturally available. He commented that Scotland is an island with lots of rain and a high head.

Meller said this summer he installed a propane generator. He felt the Energy Committee should encourage people to do the same and provide information on what they need to do (how much/little). It cost him \$4,000 to have this done, but many of the quotes he got were much higher.

Spear suggested having the Green Fair during the school year so that the students from SIFE could help out. He wasn't sure if they could become a conduit for revenue. He proposed at the next meeting the committee members should talk about getting a subcommittee together to work on preparations for a fair.

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, October 3.

**IT WAS MOVED (Mike Meller) AND SECONDED (Dave Sauerwein) to adjourn the Energy Committee Meeting of September 12, 2011.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London
Reviewed by Jack Harrod
Chairman, New London Energy Committee