



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES December 5, 2012

PRESENT: Bill Spear (Chair), Brian Armentrout (Vice-Chair), Dave Harris, Leigh Bear, Mike Rodriguez, Margie Weathers
ABSENT: Mike Meller, Allison Seward, Joan Cobb

Chair Spear called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. He noted that Dave Harris, who was present, would be in the area until at least May, but would know more in January if he would be around longer. It was thought that he would be moving to Massachusetts last month and would not be able to participate in the Energy Committee. Chair Spear thought that it would be good to add more members to the committee and this sparked some discussion about possible additions.

Note: the December 5th meeting conflicted with that of the Transition Town initiative. Several Energy Committee members participate in the Transition Town initiative as well. For that reason, members were expected to arrive at different times during this meeting.

Mike Rodriguez arrived at 7:05pm.

“Energy 101”

Mr. Rodriguez said that this program is a combination of the various presentations and briefings that have been given to congressmen, senators and town officials. It would be presented via Skype to save energy and to make use of available technology. He thought that if they could get some people from the Energy Committee and some town leadership together to participate in it, it would help get everyone on the same page regarding energy. Mr. Rodriguez felt they should look at the information within “Energy 101” as a town. He noted that the whole product wouldn’t be ready to go until after the New Year.

Margie Weathers arrived at 7:10pm.

Chair Spear suggested they could open up this “Energy 101” class to groups at the college. Mr. Rodriguez thought that would be fine. Chair Spear asked what he thought would come out of the “Energy 101” experience. Mr. Rodriguez said they all have ideas about what has been and can be done. This kind of presentation offers actual experience and showcases what is in the realm of possibility. It also gives other people who are not already involved in Energy Committees the knowledge to question things that happen in their town(s) where energy matters are concerned. Mr. Rodriguez believed he would have more information to offer at the next meeting in January. There was some discussion as to the possibility of formulating different programs for different audiences. Mr. Rodriguez said he would look into this more.

Leigh Bear arrived at 7:20pm.

With regards to other projects the Energy Committee would like to work on, Mike Rodriguez noted that there was currently not a lot of grant money out there for projects. This could change, however, and he thought a few more opportunities would become available in 2013.

Chair Spear noted that the Green Fair proposal they came up with at the last meeting was that the Committee would come up with the vision and proposal for the event and then, if possible, would hand it off to students at the college who could lead it. Ms. Bear said that there were about 12 students in the transition class who would be interested in working on the fair. There are some additional students who are not in the class who would also like to participate. Ms. Weathers said she has discussed this with Jen White, Sustainability Coordinator, who is interested in combining forces for this project.

Mr. Harris wondered if it would be possible to make the New London Energy Committee a regional committee so that interested people who live in other nearby towns could participate in their efforts. Chair Spear said that other towns have their own committees. It was noted that Andover has an energy committee but that was the closest town that had one. Mr. Rodriguez suggested forming a coalition of energy committees. Mr. Harris suggested they could have meetings every other month with other energy committees.

Chair Spear explained that the Sustainable Business of the Year award and the reusable shopping bag project efforts were put together under the Green Fair efforts as they went hand in hand. Mr. Rodriguez wondered if they could maybe sell reusable shopping bag as a fundraiser. He wondered how it fit under the energy committee as it was a sustainable effort. Ms. Bear said that recycling and reusable shopping bags fell into the category of energy conservation.

Chair Spear said that both he and Ms. Bear would work together on the recycling study.

Mr. Meller will continue with the regional transportation study. Mr. Rodriguez wondered if they could scale that extensive study down a bit by trying to create a bike-share in town. Chair Spear said that Colby-Sawyer and SIFE is running this program right now but currently all the bikes but one are in disrepair and it was felt that they tend to get abused. They were getting a lot of use, which is good, but were not available for use in their fleet's full capacity. Chair Spear said that the program will continue and they will be trying to figure out how to keep the bikes in good condition. Some people are willing to donate their bikes to the program. Mr. Harris said he was willing to look at the bikes and help with repairing. Mr. Rodriguez offered that he had a contact (a Colby-Sawyer graduate) who owns a bike shop in Massachusetts who could offer advice or help.

Chair Spear said that SERG (Sustainable Energy Resource Group) is an active group that could help New London expand their energy committee contacts. Mr. Rodriguez suggested a Facebook page for the Energy Committee. It was noted that they would need to have someone monitor the page and post things regularly to keep their readers engaged. Mr. Rodriguez volunteered to set up the page. He offered that they don't need to post things about what the energy committee is doing, but rather energy-related things that would interest the readers.

Chair Spear said the next meeting would be held on January 2, 2013.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London

