



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES February 6, 2013

PRESENT: Bill Spear (Chair), Michael Rodriguez, Alison Seward, Dave Harris, Leigh Bears, Margie Weathers

ABSENT: Mike Meller, Joan Cobb, Brian Armentrout

ALSO PRESENT: Larry Chase (Andover Energy Committee), Paul Boynton, Garrett Marsh

Chair Spear opened the meeting at 7:00pm.

Approval of Minutes of January 2, 2013

IT WAS MOVED (Dave Harris) AND SECONDED (Alison Seward) to approve the minutes of January 2, 2013, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Michael Rodriguez Update

Mr. Rodriguez said that the Energy 101 program he had discussed at prior meetings was being put on hold. He suggested that the Energy Committee could put together a program of their own in the community. He suggested breaking such a program down into business, residential and municipal portions. He thought they could keep it simple and distribute it as a report and then maybe expand it later on into a seminar or workshop.

Chair Spear said they would revisit this issue at the end of the meeting to see if they thought they should make this program a priority and create a team to work on it.

Paul Boynton, Garrett Marsh – Colby-Sawyer College Students – Transition Town Movement

Mr. Boynton said they plan to develop an energy plan for the community to see how the town can reduce their energy usage. They will break the plan up into residential, local business, and schools portions. And he hoped the Energy Committee could help them promote the residential and local business segments. The first action Mr. Boynton envisioned was to determine the energy uses in their area and how much energy costs per person. They'd do this by contacting the energy providers in the area, who could assist them in compiling the information they need. Mr. Rodriguez said that this information is available online already and they could set appropriate benchmarks from it.

Mr. Boynton thought that workshops and energy-saving events could be held following the benchmarking. He envisioned the Energy Committee working with them on this effort as there were similar goals between their movement and the Energy Committee.

Mr. Rodriguez asked if Mr. Boynton had a list of specific things he would like to gather information on. He suggested creating a questionnaire to distribute at Town Meeting. Ms. Weathers suggested doing a mass mailing of the questionnaire in the town. Mr. Harris thought that this sort of thing would be expensive. Ms. Weathers thought they could ask to put some surveys at the grocery store, pharmacy, and perhaps in the Kearsarge Shopper. She suggested the Energy Committee's assistance with the project could be that they could assemble the questionnaire and get it distributed.

Mr. Spear suggested Mr. Boynton send a list of questions he would like to see in the questionnaire via email to get them started. He wondered if PSNH would be willing to put the survey in with the energy bills for New London residents. Mr. Harris suggested putting a link to the questionnaire on the Energy Committee's website. The questionnaire could be printed and filled out. Ms. Weathers said she could print out the questionnaire from her office as long as she is reimbursed for paper and toner.

Mr. Boynton said he would like the information to them by the end of March. Mr. Rodriguez suggested looking at the NH Office of Energy and Planning's website as they would have a sample survey they could use to start from.

Climate Change Talk

Mr. Harris said he has contacted Janice McElroy from Henniker to do a talk called "Connecting the Dots to Climate Change." Ms. Bears thought this would be a good thing to put on the Transition Town agenda. They decided to have the event at 7pm on Tuesday, April 9th.

Mr. Spear noted that the SIFE team at Colby-Sawyer College has changed their name to "ENACTUS."

It was suggested that Dave Kidder be approached to possibly give some support for this talk. His support could draw a whole new group of people to attend.

Grants

Mr. Rodriguez said he found a grant that is for municipalities that is a guaranteed loan from \$5,000 to \$400,000 dollars. They can finance improvements to upgrade energy efficiency and lower energy costs and usage having to do with carbon emissions. It covers such things as insulating, improvements to HVAC equipment, and installation of alternative energy sources. Schools and SAU offices are not eligible for this program. He said that contact information was available and if the committee was interested in the program, he would find out if there was any funding left. Ms. Seward asked if this was a loan. Mr. Rodriguez answered in the affirmative, but the interest rate was much lower than a traditional loan.

Energy Fair

Chair Spear explained that the Energy Committee's vision was to have a fair on the Town Green using the help of ENACTUS. The Energy Committee tried putting the fair together the past two years but the committee just doesn't have the time or resources to do it. They have done much of the legwork and planning, but they need more help. The Energy Committee thought that they could get their vision together and hand it over to some students or a group at Colby-Sawyer College to get it going. Mr. Boynton said that he thought this effort went hand in hand with what the Transition Town initiative was focused on and he would bring it up at the next meeting the following Monday.

Green Business Alliance

Chair Spear noted that Mr. Armentrout had started a new job and so was not able to move forward with this effort. Ms. Seward and Ms. Weathers were both interested in getting this program going. Ms. Seward wondered if the Transition Town group would want to be involved. It was noted that the Alliance was intended to promote businesses to make changes that improve their energy efficiency and reduce their energy usage.

Snapshot Report - Recycling

Chair Spear passed around a copy of the report, which is a project planning tool they are currently using to keep track of solid waste recycling in New London. They will delay their meeting with the hospital until after a new facilities representatives starts at the hospital in March. Benchmarks will be set after

gathering information and recommendations will be made to the Town to increase solid waste recycling. He hoped the project would be completed in July.

Benchmarking Other Energy Committees

Chair Spear noted that the Andover Energy Committee had accomplished quite a bit. Mr. Chase said that they have been a group for the past 18 months and are made up of volunteers. They are not a formal group appointed by their town. They have had four or five events, the last being in January when 80 people came to a solar workshop. They have another event coming up in February. They advertise their events by sending out flyers, taking out a news release, contacting businesses in town that will get the word out of them, families, friends, Proctor Academy, the Grange, and the school system, that will send home notices with the students. They have never paid a penny for advertising.

There was some talk about speaking with area banks to see if they would do a “lease to own” program for solar systems for residential homes.

Mr. Chase said that they didn’t have luck talking with the SERG people. Their original idea was to have an energy expo to start off their energy events. They were dissuaded to do this by a representative from SERG who said vendors don’t want to have to be at an event like that on a weekend. Ms. Weathers disagreed with this sentiment. Mr. Chase said that this is why they have started off with the smaller workshops, which have been successful.

Perma-Culture Talk

Mr. Boynton thought there were about 95 people at the recent talk and about 35 people who attended a follow up meeting the next day.

Energy Committee Facebook

Mr. Rodriguez said he would send the Energy Committee some ideas and information.

March Meeting

The next meeting of the New London Energy Committee would be held at Margie Weathers’ office on Main Street and would be at 7pm on March 6, 2013.

Other Business

Mr. Chase noted that his energy group puts a table of information up at the elections and their Town Meeting. The Energy Committee thought this was a great idea. Mr. Chase said that if they notify PSNH ahead of time, they will provide handouts to distribute to interested people on energy reduction and best practices.

Chair Spear wondered if the Energy Committee wanted to support a solar seminar being held on February 23rd at Colby-Sawyer College. The Committee was interested in promoting the idea of solar installation, but did not want to promote one individual vendor.

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

**IT WAS MOVED (Alison Seward) AND SECONDED (Dave Harris) to adjourn the meeting.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London