

New London Energy Committee

June 6, 2011

Meeting Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jack Harrod (Chair), Peter Stanley (ex officio), Margie Weathers, Bill Spear, Russ Aney

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dave Sauerwein, Dave Harris, Joan Cobb, Mike Meller

ALSO PRESENT: Alison Seward, resident of New London

Minutes of May 2, 2011 Meeting

Harrod asked if there were any suggested amendments to the draft minutes of May 2, 2011, which he had circulated electronically to the members of the Energy Committee. There were none, so he called for a motion to accept.

IT WAS MOVED (Russ Aney) AND SECONDED (Bill Spear) to approve the minutes from May 2, 2011 as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

With regards to the micro-hydro feasibility study, Stanley said he spoke with Jay Boeri (engineer) in the past week and found that Boeri has done a substantial part of his fieldwork. Stanley noted that he has been contacted by the contract administrator to put in a monthly progress report. The study is moving along as planned.

Aney said that there were a few glitches in the lighting project. That day he believed the contractor finished the lighting at the library. When they took out the old exit signs to put in the LED ones, it was found there were no junction boxes. When they put the new signs in, they were left with a gaping hole in the ceiling causing them to bring in someone to patch the plaster in coordination with an electrician.

Additionally, in Whipple Hall, they opted to put in dimmable cold-cathode bulbs into the chandeliers. They assumed that the current bulbs were 40 watt incandescent bulbs and requested 5 watt cold-cathode bulbs, which should offer the same amount of light. The new bulbs do not appear to give off enough light and PSNH has agreed to work with the contractor who specified the wattage, as they need to replace these 5 watt bulbs with something that would be similar to what was there before. This would be done at no cost to the Town.

Harrod said this lighting issue was brought to his attention by Linda Jackman, the town Administrative Assistant, who noted that at the last Budget Committee meeting, which was held in Whipple Hall, it was very dim there and hard to see.

Aney said that all the other work should have been completed as of that day, which has been a year and a half in the works. He added that there were some other lighting issues that were discovered during the study, which could be addressed little by little in the future.

Harrod noted that Aney was on the June 27th Board of Selectmen's agenda to follow up with the MEAP grant. He had been charged with pursuing quotes for insulation work to be done in the Town Office's attic, rigid foam insulation to be installed around the basement foundation walls, and some balancing of the duct system to provide comfort to those working in the building. Aney said that he was getting three more contractors to come in and give bids for this work. Aney encouraged more collaboration and reviewing of the bids to present at the Selectmen's meeting.

Aney said that he had hoped the Town would receive support from the Municipal Technical Assistance Program. Mike McCrory is their contact from the Upper Valley Regional Planning Commission who will hopefully be contacting him soon about the program, of which New London only needs the technical advice portion. Stanley noted that McCrory is currently working on a number of things for the Town and it was assumed that these other projects, such as the Master Plan, are the reason that he is not been able to contact Aney yet about the weatherization work. Aney wondered if McCrory was actually a liaison between the Town and others who actually have the technical expertise. Stanley thought this was probably the case and would ask McCrory about the possibility of being put through to another person/people who could help the Town.

Aney recalled an environmental group by the name of CLF Ventures, a non-profit affiliate of the Conservation Law Foundation that was the lead grant winner for the tracking of municipal energy consumption. They hired a group called Peregrine Energy Group that provides the tracking software, which is free for two years. He suspects that the Town would be charged for tracking on an ongoing basis. The reason the group wants to track this information is because they were looking for a trend line towards the goal of reducing the municipal energy consumption. It was thought that this system would make it easier for the towns to track the information but in actuality, it creates more work for the towns and there is not really a lot of value in what comes out of the data collection, other than showing that the group is meeting some trend line established by a committee at the state level that said they would reduce municipal energy consumption. At the end of the day there is no valuable service to the towns to offer technical assistance towards saving energy; instead they are asking the towns to create another report.

Colby-Sawyer developments (SIFE)

Spear said that school was out. He said that at the last meeting (for which he was absent) Stanley had asked why there was no feasibility study done for the wind turbines before they did the market survey. Spear said that it was really because it was an opportunity to do a market research project. Also, they didn't want to take a further step until they knew whether the town supported it. Spear explained that it would cost about \$30,000 to put towers up to check the wind feasibility and they wanted to get the consensus from the town before spending this kind of money. Stanley said the town would be more enthusiastic about wind turbines/wind power if it would reduce taxes. Spear said there were some other options to measure the wind to check the feasibility, which were less expensive. Had they known about these options previously, they may have done the study before doing the survey.

Spear noted that the SIFE (Students In Free Enterprise) team presented this project at the National SIFE Competition. Shortly before Nationals, they went to the Annual Gift Organization of Colby-Sawyer College to see if some of the alumni could be approached for funding for a few of the test towers. Since then, a team of investors has been selected and may be willing to help pay for this project. He noted that they have lost Jake Daniele due to graduation and now they need someone else to step forward.

Aney advised not going forward with the testing yet as there are other feasibility measures available. Spear and Aney decided to exchange ideas after the meeting. Jake Daniele was highly involved in things like Recycle-Mania on campus and was heading up the wind turbine efforts. They have lost several of the SIFE team members due to graduation.

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

Weathers said she hasn't been in touch with Cobb. Harrod said that Cobb told him that Mr. Kenyon from Hannaford is planning on attending the July NLEC meeting. Weathers said she is working on a letter to the town to explain why plastic isn't good and for help in supporting this idea. Harrod suggested sending the letter around via the town email list. Weathers said she was just compiling information at this point and the rest of the committee would get a chance to review the letter before it went out. This will be revisited at the next meeting.

Sustainable Business Award

Aney distributed a draft press release and a proposed certificate to be presented to the deserving business. He asked for suggestions or changes to these documents. Everyone seemed to like what he put together. The certificate would be printed out on heavier stock and framed. This award would be presented to the Flying Goose Pub owner, Tom Mills. Someone from the InterTown Record could be invited and a photo taken. Aney would give PDF versions of the items to Mr. Mills to post on his website and/or submit to any other publications he wished. It was determined that they would plan on holding this presentation on June 16th [subsequently delayed]. The time would be determined after speaking to Mr. Mills. Aney will relay the information to the rest of the Energy Committee so that they can be present if they wish.

Peak Oil - Larry Rupp

Harrod said that Rupp has withdrawn his proposal for NLEC sponsorship to give a presentation on peak oil. Harrod had raised concerns to Rupp that the issue was already well-known throughout the community, that many people might not come to such a presentation, and that there were not any indicated action items that would come from the presentation.

Streetlights Revisited

Aney said he has a list of all the streetlights in New London that the Town is paying for. He proposes to do a complete inventory again. At the next meeting he will divvy up the lights among committee members to check the accuracy of locations. Some lights being paid for by the Town, such as six on Bunker Road, really might need to be paid for by the homeowners who benefit from them. The Fire and Police Departments will need to be consulted before any lights are deemed "unnecessary" as they may be there for safety issues.

Aney added that PSNH will be doing an upgrade in the next year or two of the streetlights in town. The goal for the NLEC should be to go through the current inventory of streetlights, review the lighting policy, go over any proposals for removals or additions with the Fire and Police departments, and come up with a new set of recommendations of lights which should/shouldn't be there. Aney also explained that, importantly, this past summer, PSNH passed a new tariff and introduced a new technology which will turn off street lights after a programmed time in the night. This would mean a significant savings to the Town by using these simple timer/sensor attachments to the lights. If these attachments are installed during the regular upgrade it will cost much less than if the Town decides to have it done later on. It is time to do this review and the NLEC should do this as a committee every six years.

Potential New Members

Alison Seward, who was present, would like to join the group, as does Candice Whitman who was unable to attend the meeting. There are two vacancies. Harrod said he would follow up with Linda Hardy to have the Board of Selectmen appoint Seward to the committee.

IT WAS MOVED (Russell Aney) AND SECONDED (Jack Harrod) to nominate Alison Seward as a member of the Energy Committee.

Seward offered to share some of her background with the committee. She said that she moved to town less than three months ago with her husband and three children. Her husband has recently retired from a 27-year Army career. She noted that Aney had helped her family with energy efficiency projects in her home, and said that her brother and his family have lived in New London for the past seven years, which is how they found out about the town. She added that she started reading about peak oil about six years ago and is very passionate about it. She reads several websites daily and believes the planet has already passed the peak oil production. Seward would like to be part of a community that is trying to plan for a future of resource constraints and to do what she can to contribute to that effort. She said that she doesn't have technical knowledge and has not worked much in the last decade since they have been moving around due to her husband being in the service, but her professional background is education. She worked as a contractor for the Department of Education in Washington for much of the 1990's. She has a Master's degree in Public Policy and a Bachelor's degree in History. Harrod and the others thought Seward would be a nice addition to the Energy Committee. Harrod called for a vote.

THE MOTION TO APPROVE ALISON SEWARD AS A NEW MEMBER OF THE ENERGY COMMITTEE WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Aney reminded the committee that he would be leaving town in the near future and that he knew of some people who may be interested in filling his spot on the committee. He agreed to reach out to these people to see if any of them had the time or desire to join the Energy Committee. Aney felt there was a lot more that was still to be done in the town and hoped that Seward's strengths for outreach would be valuable. They need to reach people who don't generally attend energy-related workshops or gatherings. He suggested getting area businesses like Clarke's and R.P. Johnson involved to help in these sorts of efforts.

Aney said he would like Seward to meet with Jennifer White, Sustainability Coordinator at Colby-Sawyer College, to talk about outreach between the students and the town. In her last position with a non-profit organization, White helped create such a relationship whereby students counseled townspeople on sustainability in their town and within their homes. Aney believed that Seward may serve as a good liaison between Colby-Sawyer College and the Energy Committee.

Aney opined that if a good idea is brought up, the committee would support it.

New Vice Chairman

Aney said they should fill out the roster with new candidates, and then make a decision on who should serve as vice chairman.

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Spear said a couple meetings ago they talked about New London becoming a transition town. Since then he read that people weren't very positive about that prospect. Harrod said he looked on the website and found that Keene was the only town in New Hampshire that was actually a transition town. Seward agreed with this statement and said she hopes to go to one of Keene's meetings to see what they are doing. She and Rupp have discussed him giving a presentation

about peak oil to people in the town. People may know about it, but some may have only heard about it but don't understand what it means. She thought there was an environmental issue and a resource issue which collide in the term "sustainability." A transition town is people who feel the need to use fewer resources to lessen the impact on the Earth by making changes in their own community.

Spear said it seemed that New London would be well-suited to become a transition town. The town is small and nimble, citizens have income to a degree, and there are a lot of people with time on their hands. If they could ever set a goal that says the town wants to be carbon-neutral, for instance, he thought New London could be a town that could pull it off. Harrod thought there were a lot of individuals who would work towards this, but as a town, he didn't think it would happen. Weathers said they need to get people involved and educate them on an individual basis. Spear hoped the door wasn't totally closed on the idea. Aney thought that this idea was within the scope of the strategy document the committee came up with this past year. He suggested going to the Board of Selectmen to get the committee's charter changed to more clearly include the effort to become a transition town.

The next meeting was scheduled for July 11, 2011 at 7pm.

Aney asked that they include a schedule of outreach activities for the upcoming year within the next agenda.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Spear) AND SECONDED (Peter Stanley) to adjourn the Energy Committee meeting of June 6, 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, NLEC