

## **Energy Committee Meeting Minutes of August 2, 2010**

**Members Present:** Jack Harrod (Chair), Mark Vernon (Vice Chair), Russell Aney, Dave Harris, Joan Cobb, Margie Weathers, Peter Stanley (Zoning Board Administrator)

**Members Absent:** Mike Meller (arrived later), Dave Sauerwein, Bill Spear, Bob Crane

**Others Present:** Nick Ourusoff

Jack Harrod called the **MEETING TO ORDER at 7:08pm.**

### **1. Minutes of July 6, 2010 Meeting**

Harrod asked if the draft minutes from the last meeting were acceptable to those committee members who were present. Not hearing any suggestions for amendments or revisions, he asked for a motion.

**IT WAS MOVED (Mark Vernon) AND SECONDED (Dave Harris) to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2010 Energy Committee meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **2. Master Plan Schedule/Energy Chapter**

Aney said he was still working on the final revisions.

### **3. Energy Efficiency Community Block Grants (EECBG)**

Aney said that Jessie Levine (Town Administrator) has signed the contracts and has sent them in to TRC, the subcontractor for the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (NHOEP) for all the grants. He added that Shelley Hadfield is the grant administrator and has been working with Ms. Levine to get the paperwork in order. Aney said that they had to submit some updated energy models and were able to dig up some historic data on heating loads for the buildings in town. Carolyn Fraley (Town Finance Officer) gave information on heating oil providers with data for each individual building. Colby-Sawyer intern Chao Lu will work to enter that data. It is Aney's hope that Ms. Fraley will maintain the models throughout the year.

Aney went on to note that PSNH has been approved to serve as the vendor for the work so the town can take advantage of the utility's 50% discount and they don't have to put out an RFP for it. There will be multiple savings by using PSNH because now they can use both the EECGB grant contribution and the 50% off of lighting upgrade materials from PSNH. They are currently waiting for the blinking traffic light bid for using LEDs. The Town is responsible for two of these lights (one at the end of Seamans Road and Route 11 and one at the intersection near Tracy Library). The other blinking lights in town are owned by the school or NH DOT. Aney explained that the LED replacement lights for these blinking lights do not fall under the 50/50 program, so they can't get a discount for them. PSNH will cover LED exit signs but not street lights because PSNH is still investigating their savings. On a positive note, PSNH will give 75% of the premium the Town has to pay for an LED bulb over the price of an incandescent bulb.

Aney said that the Post Office in Elkins did not qualify for an upgrade because they had already installed T8-Flourescent lights about four years ago. They are, however, going to get some new fixtures for the outside of the fire station. The bulbs in the current fixtures cannot be replaced unless the lanterns are broken, which is not an ideal design. They plan to pick some traditional-type of sconces to replace the old fixtures. Margie Weathers (new member of the Energy Committee) volunteered to help choose the design of the new fixtures.

Aney commented that he wasn't sure where the school district was with its projects.

With regards to the micro-hydro feasibility study, Aney commented that they have received clearance to put out an RFP. He said that he knows of at least two parties that will be bidding on the work. Aney said that the feasibility

study will give people a sense of what is involved in creating micro-hydro power. It will also show if it is environmentally appropriate for that area. The closest endangered species is the loon, which is in Pleasant Lake. The work they will be doing will not change the flow of the river at all; they are trying to take advantage of the gravity in the flow of water and try to get some energy out of it. They will look at the watershed area to see what it is that flows through that area. They will have to determine how much flow they expect, as well as what the drop in elevation is, and what the force is that is created in that drop to see if it is great enough to generate electricity. They will be studying all three dams in town. Haze dam is the first to be studied, as it has the largest drop. The study will bring to light how much it would cost to develop them, as well as what the roadmap process would look like for developing micro-hydro not only for New London but for the entire State of New Hampshire. Based on the flow and the head they can determine the amount of energy that can be created. Aney said they have to take everything into effect, including the differences in flows throughout the year. Another thing to consider is who will take the power that they generate. Will they sell it back to the power company, or sell it to someone who will net meter it?

#### **4. Municipal Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) Status**

Aney said that he spoke with SDES Group, which is the outfit Clean Air/Cool Planet chose to do the professional-grade audit for one building in town. The group decided that Whipple Hall would be the best candidate for the audit. Aney told them that they may want to reconsider, as the building is mostly empty and perhaps another building in town would be more advantageous. The representative from SDES told Aney that he would come back in the month of August to talk about other building audit options. Aney told him that he has more data for him to review for each building which may aid in finding the best opportunity for savings. With regards to other buildings in town, Aney had the following to report:

- The fire station was recently built and so the insulation and building is fairly tight. Lighting was an issue, however.
- Tracy Library has just had the walls insulated and re-siding was done. They have addressed weatherization issues.
- The transfer station didn't have much there to work with – it is small and doesn't use much energy.
- The department of public works was small and didn't use much energy.
- The town office building was in good shape. The lighting and windows were fine. Aney felt that some balancing of systems could be analyzed. Harrod felt there was an insulation problem with the town office building. He remembered someone from the Jordan Institute came and looked into the attic and thought there were problems with it.
- Elkins Post Office is something to be considered. People are wondering if it would be closed soon, as the USPS is thinking of closing down some locations. Additionally the building doesn't use a lot of energy.
- The pumping station consumes a lot of energy for the town. Aney said it is hard to come up with a solution for the facility when having to consider the head movement; it is unclear and difficult to determine.

Aney felt that the police station/Whipple Hall should be considered first, the town office next and perhaps the fire station. The person from SDES will walk through some of the buildings to take a closer look. He indicated that the time the representative would take with the walk would go toward the 25 free hours awarded with the grant. Aney opined that given the usage and the amount of energy used, the town office was the best bet for an audit.

#### **5. Colby-Sawyer Developments**

The College was not represented and so there was no opportunity for discussion at this time.

#### **6. Green Fair Update**

Harris said he was trying to get Mountain Spirit Institute to be the organization they could use to channel the money from vendors' fees through, but their contact Jennifer White had tried to contact Randy of the institute and found he would be away until later in the week. He is interested but has to pass it by their

board. He said that Aney suggested talking to Bob Walker at SERG. Harris said that they have no way of collecting money yet so are hesitant about getting vendors. He said they could begin gathering money immediately once it is approved by Randy's board.

Harris noted that they now have a brochure and that Ms. White created four templates for a website. They might be able to collect money from vendors through the website. Weathers will be taking care of the tee shirts. The subcommittee has enlisted the help of Jennifer White and Debbie Cross to help with these planning efforts for the Green Fair.

There was some talk about having the various restaurants provide menus for the day and have people go to the restaurants instead of having food on the green. Harris said this would help promote business in town. Ms. Cross will do publicity via web, newspapers and TV, and Bill Spear will coordinate things with his students. The panel to approve the vendors will consist of Harris, Spear, and Aney. They are just waiting for a way to be able to take in the money. Weathers said that now that they have a flyer, it gives them more credibility with potential vendors. She has had a positive response from people already.

#### **7. Strategic Agenda (Mark Vernon's discussion paper)**

Harrod thought the latest draft was fine except he didn't think they should list the committee's accomplishments in the beginning. Vernon suggested summarizing the accomplishments in a sentence or two. Harrod thought they should be looking forward instead of looking back at what they had done. Vernon said it was an ambitious plan with a broad scope of goals, a targeted vision, and he felt if they adopted it they should be aware that it was ambitious. Vernon asked those at the meeting to read the document and contact him with comments before the next meeting. He hopes to come to the meeting with a final version.

#### **8. Committee Membership**

Harrod explained that Frank Anzalone had graciously stepped aside to allow Margie Weathers to join the group. She has been officially appointed by the Board of Selectmen. They did require her to fill out the volunteer form and submit a resume. He added that today there was an e-mail message from Bob Crane, who has resigned from the committee. They are now down to nine members. He would like to keep the membership to ten to informally keep with the state guidelines for energy "commissions", even though the NLEC is not officially a "commission". If anyone identifies an interested or active person who would like to join the committee, they should let him know. Aney thought they should reach out to the InterTown Record about Vernon's paper and suggest that if someone wants to contribute to the committee, to contact them. Meller suggested they needed to sell the committee to the public. Harris had said earlier that he would like to step down from the committee after the fall so that there could be another opening for someone else to come in, but remarked later that if there was already an opening he would be fine to stay on the committee. Harrod opined that the NLEC is a good group of people currently. Aney felt that after the next meeting they need to determine if they have the resources to do the work they want to do and if not, they need to recruit more people. Harrod said there are ways to engage citizens from the town without them formally being members of the committee, Jennifer White and Debbie Cross being two recent examples. Non-members of the committee can attend meetings and work with the committee.

Aney asked if it was better to be a commission rather than a committee. Harrod said he wasn't sure. Harrod wasn't sure of any legal rights or responsibilities that were given to a committee vs. a

commission. He thought a commission had more financial restrictions than any other committees and thought they had more flexibility the way they were as a committee created by the Selectboard rather than by state law. Harrod also noted that under a commission, members would have been appointed for fixed 3-year terms. Currently, the NLEC membership is rather open-ended and has worked this far as-is.

### **9. Atlantic Energy Information**

The Town had been approached by Atlantic Energy about servicing the town's energy needs. On July 20<sup>th</sup> the Atlantic reps came for a meeting with Ms. Levine, Harrod and Carolyn Fraley. They outlined what they could do for the Town and how they do it. They shop the energy load around to various energy suppliers to get the best deal. Ms. Levine's response was favorable. They had another meeting on July 27<sup>th</sup> with Board of Selectmen Chair Tina Helm, Levine, Harrod and representatives from Sunapee, Bradford and Sutton. The idea is to have all of the towns' energy consumptions available for Atlantic Energy to compose a deal for the final four months of the year. Each town makes a separate contract but they can get a better deal by shopping around with a larger load. Ms. Levine knows the town administrator in Greenland, NH, who has worked with Atlantic Energy. Greenland and Rye also have the potential of being joined with New London and the other towns to get the best deal. Aney liked the idea of buying energy in bulk and was surprised that the LGC (Local Government Council) hadn't jumped on this opportunity before. The school districts and the hospital are already in long-term contracts with other companies, so are not able to participate. Harrod said that this is a town government activity now but he wanted to share it with the group. It was explained that Atlantic Energy gets paid by the supplier, not by the town. The delivery will still go through PSNH. Energy bills are divided into energy charges and delivery charges. PSNH makes its money on the delivery charges, so they don't really care who is providing the electricity.

### **10. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 13. This is one week later than usual, due to the Labor Day holiday. The subcommittee for the Green fair will meet before then.

### **11. Other Business**

Nick Oorusoff sent an email to Ms. Levine regarding the possibility of Hannaford charging for the use of disposable grocery bags. He also suggested charging fees for purchasing items in plastic bottles. Ms. Levine said that the Town, under state law, has no ability to charge a tax to purchase plastic bottles. Oorusoff said he would like everything to be collaborative and have Hannaford to be in on it. He was told that they have to do these types of things at the corporate level, rather than by individual store.

It was suggested that they could encourage people to use reusable bags. Weathers wondered if they could offer some sort of incentive for people to use their own bags. Harrod felt it should be a monetary incentive. Cobb asked if they should make a recommendation from the Energy Committee. Vernon suggested they start a petition. Meller commented that the idea of charging for disposable bags at grocery stores is widely used in Spain. Harris asked if, when they gave discounts at Hannaford for bags, it showed on the receipt. It was noted that Hannaford no longer gives discounts for reusable bags. Harris wondered if they could track that to see the amount of bags used.

Meller said that plastic bags are cheaper than paper. He was involved in introducing plastic bags into the grocery stores in the early 80's. They didn't have the kind of plastic then that would take the kind of weight needed. Even still with the better plastic, it is cheaper to use plastic. In a store, a person has to ask for a paper bag because they are more expensive.

Harrod suggested asking the Energy Committee to encourage area businesses to offer incentives for those who come in and use their own bags. Nick Ourusoff said that they need to change people's behavior. Encouraging people won't do it; charging them to use the disposable bags will. He thought they could ask Hannaford to introduce this as a pilot program.

Weathers thought they should perhaps create a pledge for people to sign, like Oprah Winfrey's "No Phone Zone." This would make it a public initiative. Vernon asked for this topic to be put on the next agenda to allow for more time to discuss it further.

#### ***New Visitor Information***

Harris said he was in the info kiosk in town and was asking what kinds of questions visitors have. He was told that people ask about area restaurants, and hiking and bicycling routes. They had nothing to give to bicyclists. Harris found a website called Ridedog.com. From the website, he was able to create six bicycle rides from downtown ranging from 10-45 miles in length. He has made paper copies and referenced the website so people can log on and create their own routes.

#### ***Bike Racks***

Vernon said he spoke with John Kiernan on doing bike racks. He wondered if they could put an acknowledgement sign that said that Village Sports had donated the bike racks. Stanley said that the Town is not bound by its own regulations. They wouldn't have a problem putting a small sign on the racks.

There being no other discussion, Harrod called for a motion to adjourn.

**IT WAS MOVED (Russ Aney) AND SECONDED (Mike Meller) to adjourn the Energy Committee meeting of August 2, 2010. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary  
Town of New London

Reviewed by Jack Harrod

Chairman, New London Energy Committee

