

New London Energy Committee

July 11, 2011, 7:00pm

Meeting Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jack Harrod (Chair), Dave Harris, Joan Cobb, Alison Seward (new member), Peter Stanley (ex officio), Margie Weathers

OTHERS: Brian Armentrout (potential new member), Nate Kenyon (Hannaford manager)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dave Sauerwein, Mike Meller, Russ Aney, Bill Spear

The meeting began at 7:11 p.m., when a quorum was reached.

Minutes of June 6, 2011 Meeting

Harrod asked if there were any suggested amendments to the draft minutes of June 6, 2011, which he had previously circulated by e-mail to the members of the Energy Committee. There were none, so he called for a motion to accept.

IT WAS MOVED (Margie Weathers) AND SECONDED (Dave Harris) to approve the minutes from June 6, 2011 as circulated.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Harrod indicated that Nate Kenyon from Hannaford was present to discuss the reusable shopping bag issue. Harrod remembered that when the reusable bags were first introduced at the New London store, a small discount was given for each bag used by customers. He also said that while the bags are still prominently available at the store, the checkout clerks do not promote the use or purchase of them. He thought perhaps the clerks could suggest purchasing a reusable bag. Mr. Kenyon said that he didn't think it would be a problem to ask the customers if they *have* a reusable bag to use, but wanted to steer clear of making people feel like they have to buy them. He didn't think corporate headquarters would like them to approach people from that angle. He said that they hang the bags right at the register and many people do purchase them at check-out.

Harrod asked why they could not offer a discount for the use of bags. Kenyon said they have asked for that again but they have been told that they have been negatively impacted by doing this in the past. He noted that other stores charge people for the use of disposable bags, which promotes the use of reusable bags without having to give a discount.

Weathers wondered if they could post signs in the parking lot to remind people to get their reusable bags from their car before they go into the store. Kenyon said that he would be happy to, but would need to find out the regulations in New London and whether additional signs would be allowed (Peter Stanley, the zoning administrator and sign expert, offered to assist).

Seward asked if they would ever have a "buy one, get one free" deal on the reusable shopping bags. Kenyon said that with the bags they have now, they do not make a profit on them; they mainly break even. He noted that people in New London do very well using reusable bags

compared with other towns. Seward said it would be a good idea to promote this fact and perhaps try to find a percentage of plastic versus reusable bags that leave the store to further accentuate the point.

Stanley asked if, when the discount had been given for use of the reusable bags in the past, did Hannaford have a tracking mechanism to calculate how many people were using reusable bags? Kenyon said that at that time they did have a way to track the *sale* of the bags, but they also gave a discount for people who were coming in with reused paper bags. Kenyon said that in Belgium they charged about 1.50 Euro per disposable bag. In California they are seeing a trend of people having to pay for plastic bags.

Harrod asked if they have a recycle bin for plastic bags. Kenyon said they did: one for plastic and one for paper. Several on the committee said they were not aware of this and that perhaps it should be promoted more. Kenyon said that perhaps they could bring the bins more to the forefront in some way.

Harris thought it would be helpful to thank a person for bringing his or her own bag instead of asking if they wanted paper, plastic or to purchase a reusable bag. He asked Kenyon if they planned to implement any sort of rewards card like some other grocery stores do, as this would avail itself to tracking things like the type of bag used by customers. Kenyon said that Hannaford doesn't want to use such cards, as they are used primarily for tracking customers' purchases. He felt it was a gimmick and hoped his company would stay away from that type of thing.

Weathers said the Concord Co-Op promotes their bags because they are biodegradable and are better for the environment than paper. Kenyon said the bags they have at Hannaford are recycled but wasn't sure what percentage of them comes from recycled materials. Weathers also commented on the veggie bags and wondered if they could put a sign near them that says something like "do you really need a bag for your fruit?" She thought an 8"x10" stand at the counter or vegetable bins explaining why plastic is bad would be helpful. This thin type of plastic is bad not only because it can't be recycled, but because the manufacturing of it creates estrogenic compounds. Kenyon said that this would be a corporate decision. He didn't think they would get anything past corporate that would try to tell the customer what to do, but he said that he was all for educating the customer.

Stanley said one issue he sees with the vegetables is that some of the foods need to be separated from the other items in the cart. They would need to offer an alternative way to carry some vegetables out of the store. Weathers said that they won't change people's minds by telling them what to do, but by raising awareness so people can decide and educate themselves.

Cobb said there were other plastic containers they could consider changing by using glass. Harrod indicated that it is not Hannaford's decision as to what products are contained in, but is the choice of the supplier.

Kenyon said that at Hannaford, they recycle anything they possible can: tin/aluminum cans, glass and plastic. They recycle the plastic bags that their coffee comes in, as well as shrink wrap and plastic wrap, and they have been doing this for a long time. When stores are close enough to each other, they will also have shared compost units (not the case for the New London store).

Harrod said that Weathers was working on a letter that would be sent to the Chamber of Commerce and area businesses promoting the use of reusable bags and the problems with using plastic bags.

Harrod also said the committee is trying to come up with creative ways to expand and promote the use of reusable bags. Harris said that they are trying to get people to start the habit of using their own bags. Weathers said it should be more visible about how Hannaford recycles and supports the environment. Harrod said this could be done without it having it a corporate, system-wide policy. Someone could take out an ad in the Kearsarge Shopper or the InterTown Record explaining what Hannaford is doing for the environment. Then it would be store-specific and not corporate.

Harris asked if the committee should generate an article in the InterTown Record to say that Kenyon came to the Energy Committee to talk about this effort. Kenyon didn't feel it was necessary to draw attention to himself or the store, but he hoped it could be a town-wide effort.

Seward wondered if it would be OK for someone to hang out in the store to count how many people were using reusable versus disposable bags. Kenyon said that they could look at the number of bags purchased by the store from one year to another, and noted that that number has been going down over the years as more people are using reusable bags. He wasn't sure how he could get a very solid number or percentage of reusable versus disposable bags used.

Weathers said that if there was a big incentive attached to using the reusable bags throughout town, it would entice people to use them. She felt it was key to get the kids involved.

Harrod thanked Kenyon for coming and he hoped the committee and Hannaford would continue to have a good relationship. Kenyon thought maybe they could put some messages over the store's intercom about remembering to use reusable bags. Additionally, they could possibly get into the schools to promote things such as composting and cutting back on plastic. Kenyon said that they call him "Captain Planet" at Hannaford because he is so forward thinking with recycling. He has a passion for recycling and being "green."

Kenyon thanked the committee for having him and said he would like to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

Energy Efficiency Community Block Grants

Harrod said all the lighting retrofits have been completed, according to e-mails he has seen from Russ Aney and the contractor (Aney being absent from the meeting).

Micro-Hydro Study

Stanley said Jay Boeri has done most of his baseline documentation work for the dams and is working on the next step, which is assembling the data.

Colby-Sawyer College

Both of the representatives were not present. Since it is summer vacation, Harrod didn't think there would be much to report on in any case.

Sustainable Business Award Presentation

Harrod said that this took place on June 24th and was covered by the InterTown Record, which included a picture. The week before the event there was an article about the Flying Goose and

what the brewpub had done with its energy-saving solar hot water project. He noted that there was also a small mention of the award in the Valley News. The Flying Goose is the only solar-powered brewery in New Hampshire.

Street Lights

Aney was not present so this item would be discussed at a later meeting.

New Members

Harrod said that Seward was on the agenda to be officially appointed by the Board of Selectmen, which was meeting at the same time as the Energy Committee meeting (Seward's appointment was subsequently confirmed). Stanley noted that Seward would need to stop in with the Town Clerk to be sworn in (not necessary for appointed volunteers, according to the Town Administrator in a later communication).

Brian Armentrout was present and was interested in joining the Energy Committee. Harrod noted that Armentrout works for groSolar, a solar energy company.

Armentrout said he and his wife moved back to New London a year ago and that he is the marketing manager for groSolar. He said that his company used to be a large residential installation company but is now only a large scale commercial and utility-scale solar installation company. Armentrout said he spoke to Aney about the committee and was excited to get involved and found this kind of work rewarding.

Harrod explained that since Armentrout worked for groSolar, he should recuse himself in any situation where he or his company may gain personal or corporate advantage from information obtained in committee discussions.

Harrod said he would talk to the Town Administrator to have Armentrout put on the list for the Board of Selectmen to appoint him to the Energy Committee. Even before Aney's departure, the committee will still have an open spot, assuming an informal limit of ten members (Harrod explained that state legislation, which covers energy "commissions", specifies a limit of ten members; while this law does not apply to the NLEC, created by a town petitioned warrant article in 2007 before the state legislation was enacted, the committee maintains an informal limit of ten members so as not to conflict with the intent of the state law).

Outreach

Harrod said that the committee has recently had a lot of publicity with the sustainable business award and that this was a step in the right direction.

There was some talk about the Green Fair that committee members had been working on last year. They decided a non-profit organization would need to be involved to be able to handle the money coming in and going out in a legal way.

New Vice-Chair

Harrod said that once they have the committee reconstituted, members can think about this collectively. He would be happy to have the chairmanship go to someone else if that was desired.

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Seward said that Aney is actively involved in what the committee does. She wondered who will start doing everything that he has been doing (Aney has told the committee he plans to move out

of town by the end of the summer). Harrod said that the departed Town Administrator (Jessie Levine) would in retrospect probably not have applied for the EECBG block grants because it took a lot of time and bureaucratic red tape to get them from start to finish. Harrod said that Aney was supposed to make a presentation to the Board of Selectmen for some MEAP work to be done re insulation in the attic and around the foundation of the Town Offices. He knows a meeting has been set up with Ms. Hallquist, the new Town Administrator, to share this information. Harrod agreed that more people need to get involved to take over the work that Aney has been doing. Everyone has his or her own strengths and he hoped if they get the right mix, the committee will be able to accomplish much.

Cobb said that Aney did an incredible amount of work and that he is terrific. She also said she went to the Warner Farmers' Market and spoke to a Mr. Huntoon who was interested in things that the Energy Committee was trying to do with the recycling of plastic bags. He was willing to use cloth bags when possible.

Harris reminded members that he is a trustee at the library. Over the past few years the library trustees have been doing some things to make it more energy efficient. They are currently working to insulate the rest of the building envelope and they have done a good job with soy-based spray insulation. They have interior storm windows and new frames with old glass being installed in the next week. Right now, they are re-doing the front entrance of the library to fix problems such as snow that would generally fall into the walkway, making it ADA compliant, and creating a door that is easy to open. Their main objective was to keep the snow and ice from falling onto patrons. Their energy savings were about 25% from before they started the overall project and hope it will be higher when this part of the project is completed.

Members present agreed that a meeting in August was not advisable, especially given the minimal attendance at the June and July meetings. The next meeting therefore was scheduled for Monday, September 12, 2011 at 7:00pm., the first Monday of the month being an official holiday (Labor Day).

The meeting adjourned at 8:11pm

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London

Reviewed by Jack Harrod
Chairman, New London Energy Committee