

Strafford Energy Committee (SEC) Meeting Minutes

1/8/19

7:00 PM

Town Office meeting room

Meeting called by: Doc Bagley **Type of meeting:** SEC regular meeting

Facilitator: Doc Bagley **Note taker:** Jim

Attendees: Doc Bagley, Kevin Grady, David Lutz, Janet Cavanagh, Jim Schley

Next Meeting: Feb 12, 2019: Energy Committee meeting

Minutes

Agenda items:

- Minutes:** Approve last meeting's minutes.
- Button Up Weatherizing Campaign: 35 sign ups so far in Strafford.**

Pre-meeting discussion of Button Up reviews and priorities — insulation and sealing. For “passive house” standards, recommendation is for R-70 in the ceilings and R-40 in the walls. Question of the ecological merits and de-merits of polystyrene vs. cellulose, because of fossil-fuel source of plastics.

— Paul Marcuvitz has requested that we return the boxes of promotional literature, fridge thermometers, weatherstripping samples, and signs, etc., we didn't use. **Action item:** Janet will tell him that someone will bring this to Montpelier at some point.

— **Action item:** Janet will follow up with Capstone to confirm financial thresholds; Thetford is focusing on affordability, and Janet will check with Michael Keiss there.
- Window Dresser update by Doc.**

Doc has contacts in Glover and Montpelier who are moving forward. He is going to go visit Glover on Friday (1/12). Bob Walker has taken this on for Thetford. Doc and Kevin are considering going to Maine.
- Update from Gus Speth on the Children's Climate Law Suit.**

Gus posted organizations he cited in his talk at the United Church of Strafford:

Kids and young people: Our Children's Trust (bringing the lawsuit), Young Voices for the Planet, imatter (imatteryouth.org), Sunrise Movement (sunrisemovement.org),

Local groups: Two Rivers Action Coalition (tracvt.org), United Church of Strafford, Universalist Society of Strafford

State organizations: VPIRG, VNRC, Energy Action Network, 350vt.org, (see list of groups signing the climate action statement I circulated earlier), Energy Independent Vermont (www.energyindependentvt.org/)

National organizations: Our Children's Trust, Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club - 350.org, Citizens Climate Lobby, The Climate Mobilization
- Enhanced Energy Plan.**

We need to complete the process of finalizing the plan and present this to the other bodies in town with the map Micki made.

Action Item: Doc will add the Two Rivers language into the draft Enhanced Energy Plan. Dee Gish said that we can include the Strafford mine site in our totals for renewables, since the plan's purpose is to show that towns are moving together in good faith with renewables initiatives; the mine site's Renewable Energy Credits will be retired in ten years, then can be counted in Vermont's portfolio.

Then the plan needs to be read carefully piece by piece. **Action item:** Anyone on the committee who can will meet on Saturday, January 19 from 9:30 to 11:30 to review the plan.

Questions: How can we as the Energy Committee identify any particular site as “preferred” for renewable energy? The state was hoping that “Enhanced Energy Planning” would be more proactive, whereas the Conservation planning process tends to lean towards “leave everything as it is.”

Kevin feels that we need to present this to the other committees in the town with a clear, compelling purpose statement and rationale. The level of awareness of the imperative of reducing our carbon consumption is not fully appreciated and needs to be communicated by us to the other town committees, as well as the fact that solar sites are not permanent, and other renewable energy sources may be available in the future.

If Strafford affirmed that a particular site is “preferred,” would this allow the landowner/developer get the higher level of incentives?

With respect to transportation, Janet has heard that our town trucks use considerably more fuel than our neighbors, as we have more than eighty miles to plow. How can the amount of fuel used be reduced?

6. Town Report: Energy Committee annual report is due to Nellie Pennington by January 21. **Action item:** Doc will do a draft and send this to Janet and Jim to be proofread.

7. Ideas for the new year: Doc plans to work with Lisa Bragg to clean up and update the Energy Committee page on the town’s website, including links for partner organizations like Button Up, Capstone, Efficiency Vermont, the Thetford-Strafford community solar, Vermont Energy Dashboard, etc.

Can we find ways to be an information resource for other town entities and facilities to improve efficiency: Town garage and school (pellet boilers?), Barrett Hall, gym and kindergarten, town office, the churches? District heating for the two villages?

Janet asked if anyone on the committee has interest in raising questions about food — impacts of our meat-intensive practices on climate. We could show some movies and host discussions in partnership with some other local food advocates. Is this a priority for our committee? “We have plenty on our plates,” already (pun alert), in focusing mainly on weatherization, heating of town buildings, transportation. Carbon sequestration is another area we could explore, as Sustainable Woodstock is now working on. The hard part is marketing, David says: to get people in the door, since the same people often come.

Coming back to our priorities: could we get information on heating costs of the existing town buildings? Janet heard that Strafford’s highway department trucks use twice as much fuel as neighboring towns: Can we learn more about these costs and help find ways to address the costs and energy impacts?

Maybe we could take on the task of doing an audit of all town energy expenses.

8. SEC Mtg Feb 12: Town Clerk’s office

The meeting adjourned at 9:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jim Schley