

Strafford Energy Committee (SEC) Meeting Minutes

2/6/18

7PM

Town Office meeting room

Meeting called by: Doc Bagley

Type of meeting: SEC regular meeting

Facilitator: Doc Bagley

Note taker: Jim Schley

Attendees: Doc Bagley, Janet Cavanaugh, David Lutz, Kevin Grady, Gretchen May, Steve Willbanks, Jim Schley

Others interested: Jason Stableford

Next Meetings: — Meeting with Chris Damiani, Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission (TRORC): Monday, February 19 at 7PM in Town Office meeting room
— Regular meeting: Tuesday, March 13 at 7PM in Town Office meeting room

Minutes

Agenda item: SEC status vis a vis the town

Presenter: Doc

Discussion:

We talked about the different forms of town body, and Steve explained how the Planning and Conservation Commissions relate to the Selectboard. We agreed that the Energy Committee will be an ad hoc body, not one with appointed (by the Selectboard) members with specified terms of office. We will follow the requisite open meeting rules, including the posting of our agenda 24 hours prior to each meeting and the minutes within 5 days of a meeting. Doc will send to Town Clerk Lisa Bragg our most-recent previous minutes, and Lisa will update the town website with our member roster. In the future Jim can send to Lisa the draft minutes, or maybe it's better if Doc approves them for posting each time.

Agenda item: New members

Presenter: Doc and Janet

Discussion:

We welcomed Gretchen May to the committee.

Agenda item: Enhanced Energy Planning for Town Plan

Presenter: Doc

Discussion:

Discussion of our opportunity to meet with Chris Damiani of Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission in order to learn how we can take part in training TRORC is offering to citizens in towns in our area. The goal will be to develop an Enhanced Energy Plan that we'll propose to the Planning Commission and Selectboard be incorporated into Strafford's Town Plan as an update. The components of an Enhanced Energy Planning process include siting of renewable and other sources of energy and also energy-efficiency standards, weatherization measures, and reduction of fossil-fuel transportation and single-occupancy vehicles. Steve would serve as the liaison between the Energy Committee and the Planning Commission.

Outcome: Doc has arranged for Chris to come to Strafford on Monday, February 19 at 7PM to meet with those who are available in the Town Office meeting room.

Agenda item: Strafford–Thetford Community Solar

Presenter: Doc and Janet

Discussion:

Because the Public Utilities Commission (PUC; previously called the Public Service Board) imposed caps on net-metering from solar arrays, the economics of community solar have essentially collapsed. In addition to the caps, the siting procedure has become much more complicated and costly, even for smaller projects, with archeological, wildlife-impact, and other impact assessments now required.

The PUC is currently reviewing an application for a Certificate of Public Good (CPG) for the Strafford–Thetford Community Solar project, and we talked about a potential meeting with Dori Wolfe to get an update. This hasn't yet been scheduled.

Jim will ask Dori to clarify the URLs for interested people to be able to monitor performance at Elizabeth Mine site and the array near Barrett Hall.

Agenda item: Carbon Pricing and the Essex Plan review

Presenter:

Discussion:

This is the focus of the “action” group from Strafford, Sharon and several members of the Energy Committee are going to their meetings. At some point we could consider co-sponsoring with them a public forum on the Essex Plan and other carbon-reducing strategies.

Agenda item: Weatherization and Energy Education

Presenter:

Discussion:

There is potential grant-support and expertise available from Vital Communities and also from the Capstone program, which covers Orange County. Several members of the committee see weatherization as their primary interest, and we all agreed that positioning our committee in the community as a source of help with affordable, achievable energy-efficiency and heat-saving measures from which anyone can benefit will be an important way to establish an effective and non-controversial role for ourselves.

We also discussed the importance of our committee providing up-to-date, accurate, and documented information about the positive impact and affordability of renewables, energy efficiency, and non-carbon options in response to confusions or outright misinformation in the community, for instance on the town's list-serv.

Doc will craft a response to recent postings on the list-serv about the high cost and short productive life-span of photovoltaics, and everyone is encouraged to send comments that he may incorporate.

We also want to gather positive success stories of people in town who are using alternatives in home heating, electricity generation and storage (i.e. Tesla wall battery bank), transportation and other areas for inclusion in the Energy Committee report in the *Strafford News* and other venues.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40.

Respectfully submitted by Jim Schley, committee notetaker and reporting secretary.