



**ACTION ITEM: Dorian** will share the graphic for our results with Matt and ask about ways of posting this (Google link, town Facebook page, poster version for Recycling center); are there ways to tabulate more of the responses? **Matt will clean up the graphics. Done.**

**ACTION ITEM: Jim** will take TREX plastic recycling guidance sheets to Coburns' and Recycling Center. **Carried over.**

**ACTION ITEM: David** will do a listserv posting about electricity, providing the ISO New England link and explain how the Green Mountain Power battery option works. Also mention the potential for vehicles to power homes. **Done.**

**ACTION ITEM: Doc** will look at the Energy Action Network dashboards for Strafford; that shows that as of 2022 there were 71 heat pumps installed in homes here. They have different filters to search on sectors (agricultural, municipal, transportation, industrial, etc.): <https://eanvt.org/vermont-energy-dashboard/> **Carried over. (Question came up: where does information on the dashboard come from? How accurate are the numbers, or are they self-reported?) Status isn't clear.**

**ACTION ITEM: Matt** will volunteer to do an energy audit for the town garage office to spec the project and size a heat pump. This could be a good used for the MERP grant. **David** will help **Matt** connect with the people he needs to work with on this. **Carried over pending whether or not Strafford gets one of the MERP grants.**

**3. Discussion of climate preparedness and resilience:** Discussion of the Asheville, North Carolina region's destruction from Hurricane Helene — not coastal communities. Dorian has close friends there, in their nineties, and their house was okay but they had to evacuate because there was no infrastructure, services, or utilities. Dorian pulled out the town's resilience planning documents (the 2022 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Flood Hazard Area Zoning Ordinance, which was adopted in 2023), one of which our committee contributed to, and noted that there was more attention to drought than flooding.

Susan asked if we might meet with Jason Schumacher, the town's Emergency Response coordinator, to learn more about what plans exist. What provisions, for instance, have been made for communication? Does the town have access to satellite phones, like there are town buildings that have backup generators? Do the road crew and town trucks communicate by radio? Are there regional evacuation plans? Do they have lists of people who would need help, and list of volunteers who would like to be on-call to help with evacuations?

Matt mentioned Eric Donaldson, who also lives here, and is a specialist on riparian landscapes and hydrology—he is a “fluvial geo-morphologist.” He has already responded that he'd be happy to speak with us about resilience planning.

Are there ways that we could host and guide discussion of strategies for our town, given our geographical features? Susan noted that there are different forms of flooding — fast water jumping from streams and/or flood waters spreading out in pastures and flood plains, which can be helpful for absorbing storm runoff. Susan also said that there are now “unheard-of” storms that are very difficult to plan for, since they're inconceivable. What kind of evacuation plans exist? Could we have a handout of basic preparedness measures

Dorian recalled that after the flooding in 2023 there was a town-wide inventory of culverts in town; who could we ask about the outcome of that survey and possible funding?

Backup generators and batteries came up, but David and Matt mentioned that electric vehicles with vehicle-to-load capability have much more power to provide a house than a power-wall battery.

Jim mentioned that the Community Nurse board has been talking about health resilience — support for elders, ways of delivering medicines and food.

Kaz asked if our committee uses GoogleDocs for sharing information? Yes, there's an Energy and Climate Committee folder on Google Drive. Doc checked the permissions for sharing this folder, and he added those who aren't yet there.

**ACTION ITEM: Dorian** will ask soils specialist (and Thetford resident) Dede Pershouse if there are resources for community planning in flood mitigation and resilience for our region?

**ACTION ITEM: Matt** will ask Eric Donaldson if he has knowledge or recommendations of resources for flood-mitigation and resiliency planning.

**ACTION ITEM:** Dorian requested that **David** ask Intramunicipal Energy Coordinator (IREC) Harry Falconer (of Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Planning Commission, which helped create Strafford's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan) what ongoing planning is being done around flood mitigation and resilience. Are there regional evacuation plans?

**ACTION ITEM: Jim** will ask Strafford's Emergency Response coordinator Jason Schumacher if he'd visit one of our meetings (say for half an hour) to talk about what plans exist for our town, and how our committee could help with planning.

**ACTION ITEM: Kaz** will contact the Strafford grant-writer Stephanie Slayton to ask if she is aware of climate-resilience planning grant possibilities for Vermont communities.

**4. Intramunicipal Energy Coordinator (IREC):** Harry Falconer did submit a MERP grant for Strafford's town garage, so now we need to wait to see who the state funds; lower-income towns are their priority, so Strafford isn't

#### **5. Legislative Report from Susan H.:**

Susan provided the 350Vermont's fact sheet on the Clean Heat Standard, which will be a major focus of debate in the next legislative session:

**What is the Clean Heat Standard?** The Clean Heat Standard is a framework for reducing emissions in the thermal sector in Vermont. It works by setting a clean heat credit quota for fossil fuel dealers where they can either gain credits for reducing emissions through the decided upon clean heat measures, or buy the credits that another entity has produced. The clean heat credits have a specified value that is determined by the emissions lifecycle analysis of the clean heat measure that generated them.

**What's happening with the Clean Heat Standard right now?** The credit values of each clean heat measure are being decided now, and lifecycle analyses of these measures are being calculated. They are determined initially by an environmental consulting agency called Opinion Dynamics, and are influenced by the Technical Advisory Group, a group of 15 individuals who were appointed by the Public Utility Commission.

#### **What are our concerns with the Clean Heat Standard?**

→**Biofuels (biomass, biomethane, and biodiesel) are included as clean heat measure.** There is plenty of research to show that biofuels are not a viable alternative to fossil fuels. They are carbon intensive, emit high levels of greenhouse gasses, and will continue our reliance on gas infrastructure. Burning biofuels impacts our air quality, leading to respiratory illness and increased cancer risk. Additionally, many aspects of the procurement of biofuels have major environmental justice implications.

→**Hydrogen is included as a clean heat measure.** Countless studies have indicated that heating with Hydrogen is not a viable option for our buildings. It can contribute heavily to global warming through multiplying the effect of other greenhouse gasses. This effect has been historically undervalued, and new research shows its warming effect to be disastrous. This is an issue as hydrogen is a very small and light molecule, making it difficult to contain and prone to leaking.

→**Biogenic emissions for biofuels aren't being counted.** Currently CO2 emissions from the burning of biofuels (biomethane, biodiesel, and biomass), are not being fully counted in the emissions life cycle analysis. The model used to make these calculations consider these emissions to be “biogenic”, or part of the natural carbon cycle. This is a false assumption and doesn't take into account the extreme human influence on these cycles. Biogenic carbon emissions from biofuels **MUST** be counted in our Clean Heat Standard to ensure that we have accurate scoring for our clean heat measures.

→**It is unclear the role that health and environmental justice analyses have in these calculations.** Burning things to heat our buildings, whether it be fossil fuels or biofuels, is harmful to our health and augments social disparities. Given that clean heat measures like heat pumps and weatherization can vastly improve our health, they should be valued above combustion.

→**Corporate interests have been very present throughout the process of creating the Clean Heat Standard.** Former and current executives from Vermont Gas System, as well as individuals from Green Mountain Power and Burlington Electric Department were a part of the working group that wrote the initial framework of the Clean Heat Standard. The fuel and biofuels industry is heavily represented in the Technical Advisory Group, with three individuals on the fifteen person team working directly in biofuels. Our Clean Heat Standard needs to be driven by science and justice, not by the voices of corporate interests.

**What do we want instead?** We want Vermont's Clean Heat Standard to incentivize real solutions like weatherization, heat pumps, thermal energy networks, and solar. These are all listed as clean heat measures under the standard, but the clean heat credit values assigned to them have to reflect the positive impacts that they can have on emissions reductions and health outcomes.

**What can you do about it?** We have a lot of ways that you can get involved with this process! You can sign our petition, write a public comment to the PUC, write a Letter to the Editor, or join our Clean Heat Standard campaign group. We have to act soon to get our voices heard! Email [eva@350vt.org](mailto:eva@350vt.org) to get involved.

**6. Book discussion:** Susan mentioned that Strafford Climate Action will have a book discussion at \*6:30 pm\* on Monday, October 14, at the Morrill Library. Organized by SCA member Gayle Giovanna, the book is: Jeff Goodell's *The Heat Will Kill You First*. “This is a powerfully written—and sometimes terrifying—analysis of one aspect of what climate change is likely to throw at us. The author combines a vast array of well-researched facts and figures with stories that will break your heart. An edifying and important read!”

**7. Annual Budget for the committee:** The town has asked us to submit a budget request again, and we will again request \$250, though we haven't been spending that. If we hosted an event, we would have that to invest.

**8. New committee member:** The committee has officially invited Kazmira (Kaz) Nedeau to join us, and she has accepted. **ACTION ITEM: Dorian** will notify the Town Clerk and Selectboard chair that Kaz has joined us, and we'll also remove the names of three inactive members, since as an official advisory committee to the town Selectboard (not an ad hoc group), there is a statutory limit to how many members we can have.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm. Next meeting is November 10, 2024 in person? To be determined.**