
Meeting called by: Dorian Yates	Type of meeting: SECC monthly meeting
Facilitator: Dorian Yates	Note taker: Jim Schley
Attendees: Dorian Yates, Susan Hodges, David Lutz, Susan Tiholiz, Doc Bagley, and Jim Schley	
Next Meeting: December 14, 2021, 7 pm via ZOOM	

Minutes

ACTION ITEMS from this meeting:

Action Item: Dorian will send Mary Linehan an email emphasizing our committee’s eagerness to be involved in the town office renovation/replacement planning process. Presently none of us are involved in the committee that is working on this now. Also, everyone on the committee is asked to review the Town Office planning committee’s September 2021 report, which is available on the town’s website (main page).

Action Item: Doc proposed that he and **David** create a simple one-page sheet explaining what the cost per watt will be, how the shares are organized, estimate of the “payback” (about twelve years), and a succinct summary of how the Renewable Energy Credits pricing work (this project will allow participants to be truly renewable, since the credits can’t be sold), etc.; they could do this in conjunction with Catamount. There is time to do this during the winter and spring, in order to sell participation in the project. What’s needed is an explanation page then a contract page. Those of us on the committee can offer “intended audience feedback” for this document.

AGENDA

1.
Review/Approve minutes from October meeting. Approved for posting.

2.
Review and update Action Items from last meeting (see above).

ACTION ITEMS carried over from last meeting:

—**Jim** will ask Geoff Martin to make a statement for the committee on this issue as an advisement to the Selectboard and a response to Rett Emerson’s questions about how solar and other renewables installed in our town can be counted toward Strafford renewable energy goals. *Jim has no yet asked, although maybe Geoff has now addressed this for the board.*

—**Jenevra** will invite her new neighbor to join us for our next meeting (or a future meeting). ?

—**Dorian** will recommend that the Selectboard view Matt’s presentation on heat pumps as they think about town buildings and town office renovation. **YES, and as part of Green Procurement Policy**

ACTION ITEMS from the October meeting:

—**Dorian** will reiterate our committee’s support for passage of the Town Plan at this time, and for the sections on forest fragmentation, recognizing that this current plan is the basis for future revisions and can serve as an overall aspirational guide. Dorian will also contact Tory Littlefield and ask for clarification on which aspects of the Town Plan are specifically obligatory from state laws and regulations. **DONE**

—**Jim and Dorian** update on website: Committee members requested additional resource links (for instance 350-Vermont). Susan T. requested more “narration” or guidance text on the page to explain what the resolution is and what the resources are meant to offer, etc. Action Item: Dorian and Jim will continue work revising the committee’s Mission summary, incorporating elements from the four versions that presently appear in various places. **Working session scheduled for 11-15-21**

3.

Webinar/presentation update:

Susan will be doing her presentation on alternatives to plastics: Thursday, November 11, at 7 pm, on Zoom. Dorian will post the notice on the Thetford list-serve, and Susan will re-post on the Strafford list-serve.

Henry Swaze has also invited Susan to speak with him about plastics on Royalton Community Radio: Thursday, November 11, at 11:15 am.

We’ve also had excellent presentations by David Lutz and Tim Briglin/Susan Hodges; these can be seen in recorded form online at: <https://www.straffordvt.org/energy-commission>

Matt Christie’s presentation on Heat Pumps can be seen here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Gz3X0SjctBV1L9pCWnNRZmATBHjqD3B?usp=sharing>

4.

Town Plan revision: Selectboard reviewed the plan on Wednesday, October 13. Rett Emerson and Jeff Solsaa voted against. Tory Littlefield is doing clean-up revisions, then it will be adopted, albeit not unanimously.

5.

Climate Action resolve from 350 Vermont: report from Susan on Selectboard consideration. Board members expressed the objection that they hadn’t had time to review the resolution’s wording and tabled this until the next meeting.

6.

COP26 Report from Dorian: Dorian has been following the conference closely, especially the alternative events and gatherings. The most important aspect, she feels, for our purposes is remembering that “Net Zero” rhetoric and “Carbon Markets” is smoke and mirrors, not substantive and not well understood.

7.

Climate Action Plan update from Dorian: She has had some great exchanges with intramunicipal energy coordinator Geoff Martin, Sarah Brock at Vital Communities, and ___ (someone else). Her hope is that we could create a model action plan with defined-by-year and measurable steps for town-level actions, with a draft within a few months. This effort can evolve our counterparts in neighboring towns, including Thetford, Norwich, and Woodstock.

8.

Green Procurement policy update: This is another project Geoff Martin is working on, developing a policy that would facilitate sound decision-making in purchasing office supplies, fuel, building materials, and so. The Selectboard asked for more specificity, not general principles but (for instance) if you need to replace a photocopier, these are the three best options; if you need to replace the office heating system, these are the Energy Committee's and Coordinator's "pre-selected" replacements, if something breaks unexpectedly.

Dorian asked Geoff to create a draft and we could then fill in our recommendations for specific areas: plastics, electric tools and appliances, etc.

Susan T. asked if they have a schedule for equipment replacements? They do, and Geoff is trying to incorporate that into his plan.

The town office is one of the biggest and most complicated upgrades under consideration. They continue to discuss various possibilities: maintaining the "historic" structure with retrofitting versus a new energy-efficient building either on the same or a different site. The town office building doesn't need a large meeting area, since Barrett Hall and the Homestead's education center are available for commissions and committees to meet in.

Susan found a report on this committee's work on the town website: <https://www.straffordvt.org/>.

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9.

Sub-committee and other reports: monthly updates, if any:

* **Transportation:** David. 4,360 EVs now registered in Vermont. The state is robustly funding this expansion. Current incentive available from the state: in June they put \$2.7 million more into this program. The plan appears to be \$7,500 plus \$2,500 for American-built, union-built.

Dorian asked how many total vehicles there are in Vermont: David guess-timated around 200,000, so it's a tiny portion that's now electric.

* **Community Solar:** Doc reported that they had thirteen or fourteen interested people attend last evening's meeting. Unfortunately the students from the Law School's Energy Clinic presented information in a confusing way. As a committee we can be involved in recruiting participants for the Community Solar, including both residents and businesses in town.

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* **WindowDressers:** Doc reported on the success of this year's project. For next year Doc and Bob Walker from Thetford would like to see someone else coordinate. This year there are eighteen or so towns in Vermont doing community workshops. We could do a questionnaire at some point following up with participants.

* **State Government:** Susan H. reported that the Vermont Climate Council is supposed to present their plan by December 1, but apparently they're struggling with not enough time to do all they need to do.

Susan has been following new legislation in Maine and Oregon involving "extended producer responsibility" whereby manufacturers have ongoing role in managing waste.

* **Carbon Management / Forests and Farms:** Dorian continues to attend the monthly meeting hosted by Sustainable Woodstock: a small but very dedicated group. They are working on producing a guide that can be used in various towns to help landowners make good decisions. The role of forests is very complex.

Susan T. raised the question of the Ashley Community Forest, that we'll be co-owning with Sharon; this could potentially be a part of Strafford's planning to meet our climate goals, but is there anyone addressing these aspects of the forestry management for that property? Susan H. had a conversation with David Paganelli last spring about what is intended to be very careful oversight, with the aim of creating a multi-age, multi-species and healthy forest there.

Current Use has built-in assumptions that forests are agricultural, with a presumption that there will be harvesting. Dorian says she believes there should be a complementary program that allows for and even prioritizes non-harvesting, preservation of forest lands.

Pat Kelly will be giving an update on the Ashley Forest project at the next Selectboard meeting.

* **Education and Outreach:** Jim said that a priority is completing the website revisions.

* **Pocket Park:** Barbara has posted on Facebook a request for help with end-of-season chores.

Next Meeting: December 14, 2021, 7 pm via ZOOM

Adjourned: 8:57 pm

Respectfully submitted by Jim Schley, Recording Secretary