

Meeting called by: Dorian Yates **Type of meeting:** SECC monthly meeting
Facilitator: Dorian Yates **Note taker:** Jim Schley
Attendees: Dorian Yates, Jim Schley, and Susan Hodges, Matt Christie, Doc Bagley, David Lutz
Next Meeting: June 11, 2024, 7:00 pm via ZOOM

Minutes

New ACTION ITEMS from this meeting:

ACTION ITEMS: **Dorian** will make changes to the survey on the Google Form master and print more copies. **Susan** will do a list-serve posting telling those who took a paper survey that they can return it to Coburns': the bulletin board near the post office, and she'll say that we will tabulate on May 1.

ACTION ITEM: **Dorian** will offer to meet with Bryan Kovalick on **Wednesday, April 24**, with **Matt** and **David** to talk about decision-making principles. **Matt** is also offering to be involved in capital planning on some kind of ongoing basis.

ACTION ITEM: Bring ideas to our next meeting for July Fourth activities for our committee.

AGENDA for this meeting:

- 1. Approve minutes** (attached). Approved.
- 2. Review and update Action Items** from last meeting. Reviewed: some are carried over.
 - 1. ACTION ITEM:** **David** will do a list-serve post about this option to sign up for the off-peak pricing. There's a good blog post from a Rutland solar company called Same Sun that David will ask to repost. (<https://samesunvt.com/rate-11/>). Done.
 - 2. ACTION ITEM:** **David** could ask the Selectboard a little later this spring to consider installing a voluntary-payment EV charger at the park-and-ride lot or somewhere else in town. David is talking with the new IREC person, Harry Falconer, to craft a proposal.
- 3. Town Energy Survey results and further gathering** (see <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1g7XEKdj2jVHE9YScAK6bUGoa4n7F4E08cC4bV9zYJw8/edit#responses>). Susan had a table at Town Meeting and also at Coburns, and this past Saturday had 26 people fill out the survey at the store, between 9 and 11:30 — then had to stop early because she ran out of printed surveys.

Discussion of corrections and additions, including changing “Megawatts per year” to “Kilowatt Capacity” for the last question (annual yield from solar, etc.). (Matt went ahead and made this change.)

We have yet reached over a hundred replies: 80 online and 37 on paper; if we have about 544 households we’re getting a good sampling of the town.

People who are using more electricity for EVs or heat pump might look like energy hogs, but they’ve replaced propane and other fuels; David said maybe Jim and Becky are using 4 kwh a day, whereas some

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4. TRORC is developing a 10-year capital budget, and planner Bryan Kovalick sent an email to all of us looking for a possible meeting time to hear our perspectives on capital-expense projections. Will this will/should this include Green Procurement principles and energy/climate planning.

Possibly to discuss: electric trucks and loaders; charging capacity at the Town Garage (there’s 3-phase power already close by); replacement heating system for Town Garage; space heating and lighting for town office; school energy efficiency and all-electric considerations (school is perhaps the most energy-consumptive facility in town); two fire stations; Town House; Barrett Hall; Morrill Memorial and Harris Library; Historical Society; Morrill Homestead Education Center and other buildings.

Matt emphasized that we have a **Net Zero pledge** as a town, and this is an opportunity to firmly state that we need to move entirely off fossil-fuel reliance instead of using electric as a supplement to merely reduce fuel use. “Efficiency is lovely, that reduces expense of getting off fossils, but if you don’t have efficiency you start with weatherizing then move forward to fossil-fuel replacement.”

Guiding Principle: “Don’t spend capital on fossil-fueled facilities, vehicles, or anything else.” If the technology isn’t ready yet, then instead of buying new vehicles, for instance, find a way to rent for the interim.

Doc: “The tendency is to make purchasing choices the usual, easier way. Our job as a committee is to keep reminding the Selectboard, Highway Department, any other body in town that we’ve made a pledge to stop using fossil fuels, and that for every choice alternatives need to be considered. This is another opportunity to remind the Selectboard that we are here and available to advise them.”

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5. Check-in on educational postings on the Strafford list-serve:

May: Farming/local agriculture, farm stands, food (Dorian)

June: Recreation & travel: e-bikes, electric snow mobiles, etc. (____)

July: Electricity (Doc, David, Matt)

August: Household products & pets (____)

September: Fashion/fiber (Dorian)

October: Forests (Dorian and/or Susan T.)

November: Garbage & recycling, including plastics (Jim)

December: Plastics, or redo holiday posting

6. VECAN Spring summit: Saturday, June 1: Vermont Law School this year. Register here:

<https://secure.everyaction.com/6gEJmk52RkyLxONvmQGSiw2?emci=67aaf817-cbf1-ee11-aaf2-002248223353&emdi=cce152ac-ccf1-ee11-aaf2-002248223353&ceid=9518751>

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

Transportation: **David** reported that we're seeing a steady increase of EVs in town.

- * Weatherization / home heating / construction: **Matt** did a Cabin Fever University presentation that about 15 people attended.
- * Community Solar/renewables: **Doc** checked the Alger Brook solar array which has just had its best month ever.
- * State Legislature: **Susan** passed along the 350-Vermont report on the status of current actions:

Action Alert:

- Tell ISO-New England to stop spending our money on fossil-fuel peak-supply plants! Read about this and [Sign the No Coal, No Gas petition!](#) We get 35% of our electricity from the ISO-New England grid: Time to clean it up!

Statewide action alert and updates:

- The Ratepayer bill (H. 668) and Thermal Energy Networks (S. 252) are being taken up in the House Environment and Energy Committee right now. They will likely be attached to S. 305, a miscellaneous PUC bill.
- You can read what is now being called the [Stebbins Energy Cost Containment Amendment, Draft 1.2](#).
- The Renewable Energy Standard (H. 289) should be taken up next week in Senate Natural Resources and Energy.

Local updates:

- We are focusing on the proposed biochar plant in Lyndon. The Thermal Energy Working Group is developing a one-pager about biochar and a site-visit is planned for April 10.
- What actions will you all be taking in your communities post-legislative session? Don't forget to check out the [Local Action Toolkit!](#)
- **We're excited for the April 20th 350VT volunteer leaders' retreat in Fairlee!** [Last call for signing up!](#)
- **Remember the Clean Heat Standard (Affordable Heat Act)?** We still have time to shape what qualifies at Clean Heat under this statute! How? We need to show up to PUC input sessions 4/17, 5/7, 6/6 to share our thoughts. Click [here](#) for the essential elements of the CHS legislation. Click [here](#) to register and we will send you start times and Zoom link a few days before each gathering.
- **April 10th at Noon, Vermont State Legislative Briefing:** With only a month to go in the 2024 legislative session, join VECAN to dig into what's been happening at the State House: efforts to Modernize the Renewable Energy Standard, the Climate Change Superfund, Climate Resilience in the wake of the mass flooding events of 2023, and more. We'll hear updates from climate advocates from Vermont Natural Resources Council, Vermont Conservation Voters, Renewable Energy Vermont, VPIRG, and 350VT. [Register Here!](#)
- **FREE screening of *Kiss the Ground*,** an inspiring documentary about regenerative agriculture. The Vermont chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL) is hosting two screenings:
 - Burlington: Fletcher Free Library on Saturday, April 20, at 1pm: [Reserve tickets](#)
 - Upper Valley: Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Upper Valley, Norwich, April 25, 7pm: [Reserve tickets](#)

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 pm. Next meeting is June 11, 2024 via Zoom.