

and also helping people prepare their own properties to reduce hazards. Discussion of volunteer lists — who has needs, and who has ability to respond.

Eric said that Ben DeJong is the state geologist who is doing a statewide survey of landslide risks; they've been responding to occurrences but also trying to plan: identifying factors that would help predict the hot spots for landslides.

Jim explained that our committee isn't really "in charge" of anything, and we're trying to discover what role we could have to contribute to more effective planning.

Jim also mentioned that we've been talking about flooding, but we're one drought away from fire danger; nearby Bethel had a wildfire in October that burned two camps and required multiple fire departments to put out.

Dorian responded to discussion of drought with a reminder that we've become very casual about water usage; when people used to have dug wells, they were conscious of limits, but now with drilled wells people feel we have a limitless supply.

Matt asked a specific question of Eric: What does the flood ordinance say and do for the town? Eric responded that the ordinance is based (mostly) on standard/template standards, with some odd aspects, including allowances for building close to existing structures, which may not make sense hydrologically. He also said that he wished there was more information provided and shared during real estate transactions. (This is similar in the area of energy efficiency; people here are leery of codes and rules and permits.)

Eric shared a map that indicated how the "hundred-year flow" is shrinking nationwide; extreme events occurring with greater and greater frequency. Eric asked if anyone would venture a guess how many people in our town are at risk of losing their only access/emergency escape route? This would be an opportunity for some mapping to identify the pinch points in Strafford, the special vulnerabilities.

Dorian asked about the assumption that enlarging culverts would help. Eric said he doesn't know who is doing the math and determining the size ratios for flow rates to accommodate flood conditions. "Consultants are really expensive (he said . . .), but it's also possible to ask the road crew where do they go every time there's a bad storm to make repairs."

He also said "Bridges and roads are so expensive, and it's not going to be get easier; labor and materials have gone up in cost far more than inflation. And mostly people get motivated to invest in planning in response to the expense of repairs for the previous storm."

Discussion of role for our committee as a connector.

3. Doc's resignation from the committee and potential new members. Discussion of potential

ACTION ITEM: Dorian will put an invitation for potential new committee members on the Strafford list-serve.

4. Strafford Solar Array (at Rod Maclay's, across from the school): Discussion of the idea of the town buying this, now that it's come to the 10-year point and the original investors would be receptive to selling it. We're currently getting a 10% discount; if the town owned the array we'd get a 100% discount (and this array has a probable 20-year life expectancy, or the racks could be retained and PVs that are much more productive could be installed). This array is currently supplying approximately 85,000 kilowatt-hours per year, which is about \$16,000 of electric bills. The partners who receive credit are the Newton School, Barrett Hall, the United Church of Strafford, and the Morrill-Harris Library.

Matt wondered if a town purchase would create a disincentive to allowing for additional solar development in town.

Discussion of how we could do the analysis to make a case for a purchase of the array. If persuasive, the town could purchase (maybe with a bond) the array, or an individual or business could do so.

Jim mentioned the Green Mountain Power monthly invoice for July 2023, when the church's electric load was 260 kWh, and the credit from the Strafford Solar Array was 246 kWh.

Presently the investors have exhausted the ten-year tax credit, so they'll only be getting the value of the power produced; to benefit a buyer would need to have a Green Mountain Power account, in order to get the net metering stream.

Dorian asked how the Maclay array compares to the new array at Alger Brook Road: David thinks that the Maclay site is 150 kW and Alger Brook is 500 kW (larger and more productive).

Matt asked if we could come up with a figure for an already-built solar array.

ACTION ITEM: **Jim** will request annual data on use and generation (from the GMP bills) from the array for the four partners: Newton School, Barrett Hall, the United Church of Strafford, and the Morrill-Harris Library; **David** will request from Harry Falconer data for the town buildings' use of electricity annually.

5. Review of previous meetings' Action Items:

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

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

ACTION ITEM: **Jim** will ask Strafford's Emergency Response coordinator Jason Schumacher if he'd attend part of one of our meetings to talk about what plans exist for our town, and how our committee could help with planning. **Done: He would be glad to come to our December meeting; Jim will confirm when we get closer.**

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. **Carried over.**

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. **Done.**

6. November and December list-serve postings: **Jim** will do November, focusing on TREX/plastic recycling at Coburns' and the Recycling Center; and **Susan** will do December focusing on holiday-related reduction of plastic.

7. Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES): Matt reported on the RBES Action Group has tentatively scheduled an event for Thursday December 5 from 4:00 - 6:00pm at the Bugbee Senior Center in WRJ. The event will be open to all, but will mainly target municipal officials and local homebuilders to educate them about the RBES and discuss changes in the newly-released 2024 version of the code. The event will be in the form of a holiday party with brief talks about the RBES from Matt Christie and the benefits of Home Energy Rating Systems (HERS) raters by Dana Clawson. For more about the RBES, see: <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/efficiency/building-energy-standards/residential-building-energy-standards> and <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/efficiency/building-energy-standards/residential-building-energy-standards/hers-provider>.

8. Legislative/State Report from Susan H.: The Public Utility Commission just issued an order in the Lyndon biomass permitting case. They did not issue a Certificate of Public good under the fast-permitting process the developer had asked for. Instead they "stayed" the current case (pausing it), and are opening another case to investigate, among other things, the impacts of the technology and of the source of the fuel that would be used. If/when they reopen the case that has been stayed, it will be for a full 248 process which will involve testimony and public comments. **ACTION ITEM:** **Matt** will take Susan's "Repair Fair" handouts and put them in our committee's public folder.

Meeting adjourned at 8:49 pm. Next meeting is November 10, 2024