

TOWN OF SUNAPEE NH
FINAL ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

3-3-23

Location – Town Hall Meeting Room

Attendance – Shannon Martinez, Keith Chrisman, and Bette Nowack

Meeting time – 1:04 pm to 1:54 pm

1. 1:04 pm meeting commenced.
2. EC currently only has 2 remaining members since Doug Hanson resigned.
3. Shannon asked about the genesis of Energy Committee (EC).
4. EC was started in 2019 – a notice sent out by BoS to establish an EC.
5. There was no discussion of what BoS was expecting from the EC.
6. The EC had some discussions with Donna, the former Town Manager.
7. The BOS directed the EC to focus on “energy related cost savings” for the Town.
8. Original EC members were Keith Chrisman, Don Bettencourt and Joseph Bisson. Bette was alternate because Donna said EC should only have odd number of members. Once Don resigned, Bette was made a full member.
9. One of first efforts was setting up Energy Star Portfolio Manager account benchmarking Town energy use at priority buildings.
10. Energy Audits were performed on four Town buildings based on high energy usage data.
11. Audit reports were given to BoS. Donna Nashawaty said that the EC’s job was done and that she did not want us to lobby BoS or staff to implement recommendations. Reports are posted on EC website.
12. EC then evaluated various Town locations for photovoltaic arrays. After touring eight sites with ReVision Energy, the WWTP and the Middle High School were the only locations that would likely work from a financial perspective.
13. NH PUC regulations require Eversource to charge for transmission when energy is net-metered, so the use of PV-generated energy on site makes a big difference in financial viability.
14. Shannon was never given concrete direction regarding the mission of the EC.
15. The BoS has agreed to set up a Community Power (CP) Working Group to look into establishing CP in Sunapee.
16. The Town needs to decide whether to use the Community Power Coalition of NH (CPCNH) or Standard Power as their consultant for CP.
17. CPCNH has a large base of municipalities in NH which gives them bargaining power to incentivize establishing renewable power.
18. Keith and Bette have been discouraged by not being able to implement any of the initiatives (audit recommendations, solar arrays, EV charging stations), but their hearts are still in energy issues and they are willing to work as volunteers.
19. Shannon indicated that the Town had hired new talent and it would take a little while before higher priority issues were resolved.
20. Setting up Town buildings in Energy Star Portfolio Manager (PM) was intended to get a baseline of energy usage, so once energy improvements were implemented, future savings could be demonstrated.
21. Although we haven’t implemented any energy efficiency measures, provides baseline for future use, whenever the Town gets serious about implementing energy improvements.
22. PM currently contains electric, propane, heating oil data, but not gasoline or diesel, although we would still like to get this data to add to the Master Plan for documentation of the Town’s energy use.
23. Shannon indicated that she should be able to provide the gasoline and diesel data.
24. The gasoline and diesel data were not requested in the past, because it is not related to building energy use, which PM tracks.
25. Documenting this data in the Master Plan will help with future decision making on EV purchase. It will provide data to determine how much money can be saved.
26. Shannon asked if EC wants to put out a call for additional members. No, we are ready to take a break, but we will follow through with completing the energy section of the Master Plan.

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27. There was a discussion regarding potential implementation of solar in the future.
28. Even if the warrant article passes and the WWTP property is removed from the Town Forest, the ConCom did not seem to support a solar array there, since it would require cutting trees.
29. Dave Bailey and the W&S Commission are still very interested in installing an array on the hilltop, although this area has a lot of ledge and would require tree cutting. The issue of the Town owning the land, but only the W&S customers getting benefit, rather than all of the tax payers is another issue which needs to be resolved before PV can be installed at the WWTP.
30. Shannon said that the door is open to negotiate regarding the Town land ownership issue.
31. A decision was made to dissolve the EC at this time.
32. Bette could informally assist W&S Commission regarding solar, but she is a bit skeptical about cost effectiveness of the area on the hill, which is wooded, has lots of ledge, and could require reimbursing the Town for land use.
33. The Middle High School might be more cost effective for solar, once a structural evaluation has been done, however, it will need to wait until the school system has their current projects completed.
34. Federal Acts will be providing subsidies for energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy projects.
35. Recommendations in the draft Master Plan include joining a non-profit that tracks government incentives and subsidies.
36. If there is an EC in the future, it would be nice to give the EC a budget to join organizations and attend conferences.
37. One of reasons to move Scott Hazelton over to Planning and Zoning is to have better planning going forward, although Scott will be mostly dealing with short-term rental issues for a while.
38. New Town employees bring a lot of talent, but need to get established.
39. The EC assisted with preparing a letter of interest last year regarding funding for EV charging stations in Town. The letter was submitted to NHDOT, but the UVLSPC decided that they would not support applying for the grant after attending the required training.
40. EC did not have an official Town email, which made it difficult for EC to get Town information from utilities and vendors. Shannon said that Town email protocols will be changing, so they could open a gmail account for the EC in future.
41. Bette is willing to be involved with moving Community Power forward, but at least 2 to 3 people are needed to form a working group to get to the point of the Town voting on CP.
42. Ryan Polson of Standard Power, the Town's energy consultant is coming to meet with the Town because the current power contracts are expiring this year. This meeting is not specifically for Community Power.
43. Town needs backup plan for managing hydro plant when Bob Collins retires.
44. What will happen with Energy Audits? Would probably be worth reevaluating recommendation with new energy costs.
45. In CPCNH presentation, they indicated that 2 to 3 people needed in a CP working group. Ryan or CPCNH will hold Town's hand through whole process, and a couple of public meetings will need to be held to educate the public.
46. The status of the EC is "dissolved". Shannon will follow up to make it official. The EC just needs to document this decision in meeting minutes. It is so documented.
47. Meeting adjourned at 1:54 pm.