

Town of Essex
Energy Committee
Minutes
Wednesday, July 26, 2022
7:00 PM – 81 Main Street, Essex Jct

Present: Will Dodge, Dottie Bergandahl, Michael Fink, Natalee Braun, David Skopin, Tom Yandow. Absent: Irene Wrenner; Special Guest: Lorraine Zaloom.

ADMINISTRATIVE

1. Approval of meeting minutes from June 15, 2022: passed unanimously.
2. Vacancy: the Committee briefly discuss the open position that is now posted on the Town's website.
3. Use of Video: there was a brief discussion of arranging for a meeting for Will and one other person to set up a meeting with Darren and Deanna to learn to work the tech.
4. Subcommittees: the Committee discussed the fact that meetings with Planning Commission subcommittees has not yet commenced. This fostered a discussion regarding the need to break apart the existing energy plan and create new plans for Town and City. It was noted that the City is going to need its own energy committee.

SUBSTANTIVE

1. Review of EVT Weatherization Incentives and CVEO Brochure. The Committee discussed that the new CVOEO brochure was not a big change, but that the incentives for weatherization had gone up more than 47% as compared with the original. Following discussion, the Committee agreed to prepare a new announcement through FPF to have the Town distribute. The Committee also did a "debrief" of what had

been learned at the Lowe's, with the following ideas: (1) conduct Lowe's event at least once per year; (2) Look into Champlain Valley Fair (Will); (3) look into Costco (Dottie); (4) keep improving the brochure, and ask Phil March to review; **ACTION ITEMS:** Prepare "blurb" to send on to FPF for all of Essex town re: weatherization incentives; (2) check in with the Champlain Valley Expo re: info table; (3) do the same with Costco.

2. Lorraine Zaloom Discussion: Lorraine Zaloom, an energy and social justice advocate who closely monitors the Planning Commission, spoke to the Commission regarding EV charging grant application for municipalities—especially for directing towards affordable housing projects. The conversation also moved towards the possibility of adding an energy coordinator to the Planning Commission per state statute. Lorraine made the suggestion that the Committee consider becoming a Commission in order to have more authority and power in terms of the work with the Planning Commission to ensure things like vehicle charging becomes part of the residential code, as well as solar canopies, thermostats, etc. **ACTION ITEMS:** (1) Continue to investigate issue of determining qualified person to take on the position of Energy Coordinator at the Planning Commission.

3. Act 172. The discussion on this was postponed to a later date.

4. Budget Priorities Meeting at Selectboard. The Committee members discussed the upcoming Selectboard meeting to discuss spending on ARPA priorities. A key focus was the possibility that Essex may build new buildings instead of renovating existing ones to make them more efficient.

ACTION ITEM: Attend meeting and report back.

5. Brainstorming on GHG Analysis for Essex. The Committee briefly discussed Mike's efforts discussing Leanne Smith, head of STEM at EWSD, to see about a course regarding Essex's GHG emissions. A key part of the discussion included the importance of trees in sequestering carbon.

ACTION ITEM: Mike to continue working on arranging for a potential Essex Energy Committee intern.

6. Updates. (a) Anna Hoppe to attend meeting to discuss her article in Digger re: EWSD solar. (b) Geothermal for the Police Station is at least a possibility – depends on review of new legislation. Funds not to be disbursed until \$2024. (c) Rotary Club letter re: solar still in the works (but not yet sent). (d) Chittenden Solid Waste District multi-recycling facility article: Will discussed the general idea of writing an article in support of the capital investment.

7. Other Business. (A) Tom Yandow discussed the installation of a variable frequency drive system for the Sand Hill Park swimming pool for a total cost of \$2,625 through Essex Parks and Recreation (but with \$1,650 refunded through Efficiency Vermont!). The effect will be much greater efficiency for the pump. (B) Tom also discussed a project to improve the efficiency of transformers with boosters at Sand Hill, taking place in conjunction with Efficiency VT, as well as converting over halogen lights to LED. Tom also discussed efforts with the Police Station (the Town's second largest "energy hog") to work on a combination of heat pumps and solar generation. Per Tom: "I pay around \$23000 for electrical costs. The first question to me was, well, where do you want to go? I said, well, it's an eighteen zero square foot building and I'm paying \$23,000 electrical cost that I want to get [from \$127 per sq ft] down to \$75 per square foot."

Motion to adjourn accepted.

Next Meeting: Wed., August 17, 2022 at 7:00 PM. [Subsequently moved to Thurs., August 18, 2022].

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