

Town of Essex
Energy Committee
Minutes
Wednesday, September 21, 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.

ADMINISTRATIVE

1. July Minutes: Approved by unanimous vote.
2. Status of 08/18/2022 Minutes: postponed until next meeting due to Will's work delays.
3. Vacancy: position remains open.
4. Use of Video: no progress made to date; Will to follow up.
5. Subcommittees: it was reported that few of the PC subcommittees have met so far other than for the Town Plan (Will), and one for Essex Center (Tom).

SUBSTANTIVE

1. Button-Up Event / Explore Essex Tabling. The Committee discussed the current status of correspondence on the upcoming Button-Up event at Explore Essex scheduled for 10/01-10/02. A substantial portion of the meeting was spent discussing organizing and obtaining information to distribute, as well as schwag and posting of the event. The Committee also discussed distribution of responsibilities for tables, tents, chairs, and staffing of the info table. The Committee also discussed key takeaways from the Efficiency VT Button Up kickoff event.
ACTION ITEMS: A series of "to dos" in connection with Essex Explore!

2. Municipal Developments (Tom Yandow): Tom Yandow reported that there is \$107,000 in funding needed to ultimately

"solarize" the police station. Will discussed that there may be some grants available through the Inflation Reduction Act. Tom noted the urgency of trying to work with this due to sizeable demand charges affecting the municipality. Mike noted that he is still working with Tom on an analysis on the savings / demand charges. In addition, Tom reported on his successful efforts to swap out fluorescent bulbs at the police station for compatible LED bulbs (due to Tom's discovery of a ballast to help with the fixtures). The net effect would be for 32W bulbs to be reduced down to 12W. When nearly 100 bulbs are replaced, based on numbers run by Mike, this amounts to roughly 9 months of savings (roughly \$865.00 per year). These bulbs will be at police station, library, and municipal offices. **ACTION ITEMS:** Create a brief report to the Selectboard on this effort and the resulting savings.

3. EWSD Engagement re: GHG Calculation (Mike Fink). Mike will be meeting at the High School to find someone interested in the GHG project. Mike will be speaking to the auditorium at EHS regarding tech jobs. The Committee agreed that it would be great to affiliate with younger folks interested in energy, potentially as an ex officio member (similar to the library).

4. Essex Center / Saxon Hill Subcommittee Work. Tom Yandow reported on the Essex Center subcommittee's focus on potential conditional uses for land not being used for recreation over by Saxon Hill, as well as complications with the ETC Next plan for planning. There was a discussion regarding possibly reviewing some of the 12 items on the subcommittee's list to provide input.

5. Revised Energy Plan. Will provided an update of the Planning Committee's

subcommittee on the 2024 Town Plan rewrite, including focus on ways of making Essex more walkable / bikeable / less clogged on VT Route 15, and potentially focused around the Essex Experience. Discussions, but also the means of incorporating energy in a more significant way into the plan. **ACTION ITEM:** Brainstorm ways of getting input from people on Town Plan priorities during Button Up event, other activities. Separately, we may need to start having more interaction among the committees.

Next Meeting: Wed., October 12, 2022 at 7:00 PM [Subsequently moved to Wed., October 19, 2022 at 7:00pm]

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6. ANR Virtual Meeting on 09/23/2022 re: EV Regulations. Will discussed the upcoming seminar from ANR regarding EV regulations, and encouraged everyone to attend given the unusual nature of the proceeding. The Committee had a healthy discussion regarding the problem with public chargers being out of service, and the need to promote training for installing / fixing EV chargers (workforce development). The same concern applies for new housing, and especially densified housing. **ACTION ITEM:** Need a volunteer to attend / report back to the Committee. Also need to start thinking about public and private charging as an element of the town plan.

7. Updates; Other Business. (a) Rotary Club letter re: solar still in the works, but needs an update based on 30% ITC. (b) Microhydro effort for Indian Brook – tabled indefinitely based upon discussion with Lou Bressie (South Burlington energy coordinator) who explained the need for higher drop (i.e., at least 50 feet), and continuous flow, neither which are available at Indian Brook. (c) Jeff Lyon is working with iSun regarding a car port on Route 15 – Tom is thinking about this for the police station. (C) Dottie noted the availability of *The Carbon Almanac*. (D) Will noted the need to find more information on VHFA weatherization repayment assistance program information to provide to Phil and other interested persons.

Motion to adjourn accepted.