

Town of Essex
Energy Committee
Minutes
Wednesday, January 12, 2022
7:00 PM - Via Zoom

Present: Will Dodge (chair), Phil March, Michael Fink, Tom Yandow, Dottie Bergendahl, Natalee Braun, David Skopin

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Stipends are now being paid to committee members who submit tax form to staff. Chair will relay attendance after each meeting.
- Punctuation changes noted on approved meeting minutes from November 10, 2021.
- Approval of meeting minutes from December 15, 2021 with changes.

SUBSTANTIVE

1. Spring "Button Up" Concept

What to call it, whom to talk with?

Dottie suggested Senior Center Wed. Luncheon, once pandemic subsides.

Phil believes that CVOEO is something to notify seniors about.

Do we call it Button Down? asked Will. Seems appropriate, as we'll be talking about cooling done by heat pumps, said Irene.

Two items from Ann Janda via Will:

1) CCRPC will hold Energy Committee Roundtable Meeting on Jan. 31st.

Will says, let's notify them about our idea for a Spring Button Up.

2) Noon on Thursday, Feb. 24th, the RPC will talk about weatherization, including windows.

Phil thinks Lowe's was the best way to reach people thinking about home improvement.

David likes the idea of a pamphlet delivered door-to-door in older neighborhoods.

Dottie suggested tabling at in-person Town and Village Annual Meetings.

Also we should table at an outdoor event, such as July Block Party, which may be supplanted by Out and About next fall.

Get help from Ann Janda to snag some time on Across the Fence.

2. Weatherization Updates

- a. Updated Income Tables
- b. Weatherization Guide
- d.

Phil will update the income tables in the Weatherization Guide.

CVOEO appears to strictly target low-income households for weatherization; EVT and VGS focus on middle to higher-income households.

Will may have access to info re WRAP program (ARPA weatherization funds).

ARPA moneys for weatherization will likely come through the state and regional entities, as opposed to our Town and Village where plans are for use on local capital projects.

Phil: Incentives from EVT have not gone up at all this year, despite ARPA infusion.

Natalee suggested attending House Reps Community Conversation, Jan. 23rd 2 pm.

Natalee asked, what state committee is going to manage those ARPA funds?

Phil wondered, does the legislature have any input on how the weatherization funds **distributed to EVT are going to be spent?** He seeks specifics.

Town and Village each plan to use ARPA money on two projects.

3. Annual Report Draft and Updates, incl. Energy Coordinator Position, Essex Rescue, Revolving Loan Fund

Will would like to receive edits on EEC Annual Report draft by Monday.

4. Dandelion Overview Promotion

Dandelion is a geothermal company looking to expand into Vermont.

Much cheaper way to heat and cool your house.

They can do it on a very small footprint.

Dandelion will make a Virtual Presentation on January 25th, from Noon to 1 pm.

Mike will write up a blurb for Ann Janda to distribute widely to increase size of audience.

We should put on our Facebook page and on Front Porch Forum.

Check link from Ann re funding new or retrofit heat pumps.

5. Renewable Natural Gas

Dottie and her daughter in Europe did research. RNG is methane, essentially. Sometimes made by bio-digesting carbon.

Burning methane releases less GHG than other fossil fuels.

It can go right into an existing gas line.

Rule makers want to use it in transportation for larger vehicles.

Who's collecting, using, paid for it?

Is it really helping to lower GHG?

Burlington Free Press had recent articles. Worldwide coal use went up lately.

Also two PBS specials, "Polar Extremes" on Nova and "Earth Emergency". Dottie will email details. She videotaped them.

Company that makes mead and is energy self-sufficient.

Tom mentioned that half the electricity used at WWTF is produced on-site.

Use of word Renewable is [problematic].

Phil asks if Dottie know what VGS's primary source of methane will be?

Natalee: beware greenwashing. Tiny fraction of our gas is renewable.

This is a big marketing campaign.

Dottie: How about calling it captured Natural Gas?

Will: Ask VT Gas to see what would benefits be?

6. Pending Municipal Legislation / Opportunities for Interaction w/ State Reps

This will be addressed on January 23.

7. Sierra Club EV Pop Up Flash Mob

Will attended planning event.

Based on singing.

Will suggested bringing people together along with their EVs.

Event shouldn't go on with show cover.

8. Other Business

Dottie asked if we heard back from SB and Trustees on whether we can stay one Cttee.

Natalee has 350 Vermont list of bills to keep an eye on.

Phil wondered aloud which municipality pays joint committee stipends. Idea was municipality of origin.

Dana Claussen, Energy Coord from Harford, got back to Phil, who is eager to share that email.

Natalee said there was a unanimous vote in Williston to hire an Energy Coordinator.

Will is curious about the job description, which Natalee will look for.

Irene will talk to Mike Yantachka on Energy and Technology Committee at Statehouse re ARPA questions.

Motion to adjourn accepted.

Next Meeting : February 9, 2022 at 7:00 PM