

Town of Essex
Energy Committee
Minutes

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

7:00 PM - Via Zoom Only

Essex. **C.** Obtain information regarding So. Burlington Revolving Loan Fund.

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

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Approval of meeting minutes from January 19, 2022 with changes.
- Discussion regarding stipends.

SUBSTANTIVE

1. CCRPC Energy Committee Round Table

Natalee, David, and Irene all attended the event on January 31, 2022; other members watched the recording. A discussion ensued regarding the key takeaways, including: (1) ingenuity of other committees (e.g., Richmond committee for ARPA spending decisions, So. Burlington local climate action plan); (2) complicated nature of the Climate Action Plan; (3) difficulty in selecting New England Grid over Hydro Quebec; (4) Underhill energy committee free audits with thermography; (5) hiring full time energy coordinators (incl. for selling a home); (6) confusion on best means of using energy committees in implementation of Climate Action Plan; and (7) revolving loan funds.

A separate discussion was had regarding the mechanics of ARPA fund selection with Essex, with the conclusion that at the moment Tom Yandow and DPW have already worked to determine key priorities (including Memorial Hall crawl space, Police Dept. windows).

Natalee also discussed various bills she is tracking separately for 250, with emphasis on Green Justice, Clean Heat Standard, and Low-Income Weatherization.

Action Items: **A.** Invite members of Jericho / Underhill EC to meet in order to share ideas on how to work together on common goals. **B.** Working Group for full time energy coordinator for

2. Working Group Concept and Potential Topics

The Committee Members discussed various ideas / iterations of how best to form and use Working Groups. Will asked Phil to develop a list of Working Groups and Natalee asked if the list could include examples of Working Group responsibilities. The discussion was tabled until the next meeting in March.

There was also a discussion of an inter-committee meeting with Essex Housing to discuss ARPA dollars for EV chargers and weatherization for new low income housing.

3. VECAN 2022 Efficiency for Low Income Vermonts Workshop

Phil recounted a presentation from VECAN and hosted by EVT with a demographic focus on low income Vermonters with high energy burdens, focusing on incentives such as free refrigerators, freezers, washers, dehumidifiers, A/C units and heat pumps. Other incentives for Vermonters with lower energy burdens were marginally beneficial. Phil made the point that these free appliance upgrades for low income Vermonters had already been offered by all weatherization agencies in Vermont, with EVT subsidizing the upgrades.

4. Dandelion Geothermal Webinar

The Energy Committee members reviewed the webinar organized by Michael Fink which had roughly 24 people attend and which included a very helpful demonstration and discussion of how geothermal is installed, the incentives within Vermont (and their relatively low amount as compared to New York state), the importance of communities having a hiatus on installing natural gas, and the limitations (i.e., only works on forced air system). The Committee also thanked Regional Coordinator Ann Janda for spreading the word to the other energy committees to join.

5. Town Meeting / Legislative Forum

Phil recounted that at the last meeting, there was confusion among the legislators regarding the difference between EVT and weatherization agencies. Our committee is interested in the decision tree involved in funding these two separate entities.

6. Energy Storage Webinar

Dottie discussed her takeaways at a recent seminar focused on GMP peak shaving, which resulted in \$3m in savings in 2021 through the BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) program with Tesla batteries. Dottie discussed her satisfaction with the Tesla battery she installed at her residence.

Action Item : Consider (perhaps through Outreach) to spread the word to more businesses in Essex re: the benefits of signing up for battery storage.

Motion to adjourn accepted.

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

[Subsequently moved to March 23, 2022]

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