

Town of Essex
Energy Committee
Minutes
Wednesday, April 21, 2021
7 PM

Present: Will Dodge (chair), Phil March, Natalee Braun, David Skopin, Irene Wrenner, Michael Fink (new!); Guests: Samantha Lash, Dottie Bergendahl

I. ADMINISTRATIVE.

Minutes of March 10, 2021 were approved following minor edits.

Samantha Lash and Dottie Bergendahl introduced themselves (and vice versa).

Members introduced themselves to new member Michael Fink (and vice versa); limited discussion was had regarding the remaining vacancy on the Committee.

II. SUBSTANTIVE.

A. Town / Village Considerations Following 2nd Merger Vote: The meeting featured a general review of the Essex Energy Committee's Charter, followed by a discussion as to whether the second recent vote against a merger plan for the Town and Village (together with an advisory question regarding potential separation of the Village from the Town) affected the Committee's mandate. The sense of the Committee is that its work should continue until there is a legally binding vote on Village separation, without any change in the way that the Village is addressed as part of energy planning. The Committee also discussed its plan to meet with the Selectboard on May 17th in order to discuss the goals of the Energy Plan and the need to make more progress towards the goals.

Action Items: Use the May 10th meeting to plan for meeting with the Selectboard on May 17th.

B. Follow-Up from Weatherization Presentation and Next Steps. Phil provided a summary of the key takeaway points from his presentation the previous month, and a

discussion ensued as to next steps for disseminating the information more broadly.

Action Item: Phil and Will to work on crafting a message to Vermont legislators in order to share the results of the research and recommendation on ensuring that the statutory objective of substantial weatherization is met.

C. Tom Yandow Efforts with Efficiency VT. A brief update was provided on the work Tom Yandow has been doing to secure energy efficient replacement pumps for the Maple Street Pool through Efficiency Vermont.

D. Account Information for Town and Village Net-Metering Effort. Will discussed the conclusions from Norwich Technologies as to the potential extra capacity for net metering in the Town and the Village, based on the data obtained to date. Will also explained the status of the two net-metering agreements.

Action Item: Obtain and distribute additional data requested by Norwich Technologies.

E. Route 15 Multi-Use Path and Biking / Walking Efforts. A discussion took place regarding the ongoing initiative with other committees to bring greater priority / visibility / focus to improving sidewalks and bikepaths in the TOV and Village in order to encourage less large vehicle commuting, including the upcoming work planned for Route 15 from Colchester to Susie Wilson Road. Given recent personnel changes and political uncertainty, this may no longer be a primary focus of the Economic Development Commission.

Action Item: Natalee to reach out to Bike / Walk Committee chair Micah Hagan to attempt to sustain the Energy Committee's efforts.

E. Earth Day Events. The Committee briefly discussed Earth Day events scheduled to take place the following day at Five Corners. Natalee provided some additional information on 350VT efforts.

F. Global Foundries Self-Managed Utility. Will briefly updated the Committee regarding the current plan of Global Foundries to create a self-managed utility. It was agreed that the Energy Committee would not need to take a formal position on the issue at this time, with the presumption that the Town would support the change or ask the Committee for its opinion.

G. Tree Planting. Natalee mentioned the fall planting order in July and encouraged participation.

H. Conversation with Essex House Reps. Irene suggested members plan to attend their next virtual event scheduled for Sat., May 8, 9-10:30 am.

Next Meeting: May 12, 2021 at 7 pm.