

Meeting Minutes
Sustainable Hanover-Energy Committee
Monthly Meeting, March 8, 2022
Via Zoom

Attending: Bill Brown, Barb Callaway, Judi Colla, Julia Griffin, Robin Kaiser, Sarah Kelly, Peter Kulbacki, Dennis Robison, Marjorie Rogalski, April Salas, Ben Steele

Announcements

Judi drew everyone's attention to Climate Interactive's Multi Solving Institute introductory session on March 9 at 12 noon. This is the group that Lori Segal works with.

C3 and Weatherize

Barb reported that, despite the fact that the NHSaves program is operating again and funds have been re-approved for distribution, it is still unclear what is happening. Barb contacted Diane Bennett at Liberty to inquire about the restart of the program but got a discouraging response and no good information.

Barb reported that C3 is going well and that WHO KNEWs are being posted to the website.

Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

Sarah reported that her students are in the process of finishing up their work for the term and will be giving a community presentation of their work on March 9th.

Sarah's Energy & Justice course for next term is fully subscribed with 25 students. She plans to have an energy security survey as part of the course; students will be talking to Lebanon and Hanover residents to see how they are being impacted by rising oil and gas prices. Sarah reported that one group of students living off campus this winter term recently received a \$3,000 oil bill!

Julia remarked that Lebanon has a very good community newsletter and that a survey could be issued through this, as well as through their website. Tad Montgomery is the person to talk to. Hanover could also put out a survey through the Town website.

Sarah plans to share survey results with and get feedback from folks at the April SH-Energy meeting.

Communications

Everyone congratulated Dennis for the most recent newsletter. Marjorie asked if we had any idea how many people read the online newsletter? The answer was that we have not looked recently but can certainly do so. The next newsletter is scheduled for the April timeframe.

Regarding the website, Judi reported that Lyn Miller is developing pages for sustainable landscaping. She also reported that Doug McIlroy has joined the communications team and has a strong interest in environmental issues.

In addition, Judi mentioned that we are creating a video that will celebrate the 5th anniversary of the R100 vote. She is managing the project in collaboration with CATV. The video will be approximately 10-15 minutes in length. We hope to present the video somehow at the Town Meeting on May 10. Julia pointed out that there is a lack of audio-visual capability in the high school gymnasium. It might be possible to have it playing in the hallway on a continuous loop, though it cannot disrupt the school day in any way. Judi will consult with the Town Meeting Moderator and noted that there will also be a link to view the video online.

Regarding content, Judi says the video will tell a story that provides history leading up to the 2017 vote, celebrates accomplishments achieved since, and puts forth a call to action for the future. There will be interviews, plus photos and audiovisual clips. Judi will distribute links to google docs for people to comment on. In addition, if anyone has some video footage or other material, Judi asks them to make it available for consideration to use in the video. The videographers, Jordyn and Chico, will cull the material submitted.

Renewable Electricity

Tuck First Year Project

Our application to be considered for a Tuck First Year Project was successful! Focused on long-term purchase power agreements for our large electricity users, this project represents the last leg of our 4-legged stool envisioned by 3Degrees nearly five years ago!

Julia reported having a good pre-conversation last week to map out the project and get to know some of them. They all bring a lot of relevant professional experience to the project.

The first formal meeting with students is set for March 21. Julia has already put them in touch with Pete Kulbacki to get data on the electricity consumption of our large commercial and industrial consumers. She is also beginning to reach out to various companies (including Liberty Utilities), alerting them that Tuck students will be approaching them for conversations and information.

Julia considers this world changing work. (Students told her it wasn't too difficult to choose between our project and a marketing plan for a small golf course.) As part of their work, students will create a powerpoint deck to introduce and educate our large electricity users about the concept of long-term power purchase agreements. This work may well be useful to other NH communities active in CPCNH. This project has a faculty advisor and will be finished in May.

Community Power

According to April, the biggest thing CPCNH is working on at the moment is how to get the RFP out the door. With Julia's help, April just finished setting up a series of meetings with California CCA's to learn from them. CPCNH is finishing up a draft business plan and working on the operating model. The annual meeting is in April, and they are close to finalizing another grant from the NH Charitable Foundation for \$75,000. Portsmouth is joining this month, bringing the total number of members up to 19. Still need to staff the organization.

Size is the biggest constraint; CPCNH has 36 directors—18 primary and 18 alternates. This is not a bad problem, but the Board must meet in person, and it is sometimes challenging to get a quorum. Once there is staff to run the program, this will be less of an issue.

There is talk right now about getting the power services up, probably by the spring of 2023. They have to be careful about when to launch the program; it should not be done in a really high-priced environment, because the CCA always gets blamed for the price increase, regardless of the real reason.

Julia commented that April and Pete have dedicated huge amounts of time to this project.

Bill asked if CPCNH would be getting better rates through time-of-day usage. Julia explained that the utilities are in control of this; they own the meters that must be updated to make it possible.

Community Solar

Judi has been trying to understand what is happening with Charlestown Community Solar (CCS) by creating a spreadsheet that combines data from the project's dashboard, the monthly statements from Liberty Utilities (LU) to CCS for electricity generated, and her own monthly statements from LU. She has one missing piece of information -- the July statement LU to CCS that covers June—the time of greatest potential sunshine. Both Charlestown Community Solar and Judi have asked for this statement, but Liberty has thus far been unable to provide.

Pete reported that the Town has similar problems trying to get information. April suggested that Judi submit a complaint to Don Kries, consumer advocate. Julia advised Judi to draft an email describing the issue on behalf of all the Hanover residents who participate in CCS. Julia and Pete could then send to LU with a copy to Don Kries expressing everyone's frustration.

Zoning Setbacks for Solar

Marjorie reported that the setback was approved by the Planning Board and will be on the Town warrant. How can we educate people about this before the Town Meeting? We need an update from Rob Houseman, who is out this week.

Julia reported a particular challenge. Dartmouth students have put forth a petition warrant article that includes a proposal to change zoning with respect to students' residences and to solar setbacks. It is not clear why the petitioners combined these two items in one warrant article. This is going to confuse voters. Also, the student amendment has legal flaws. The Town cannot deny a petition warrant article. Marjorie suggested we clarify these issues for residents prior to Town meeting.

Transportation/Mobility

EVs

Pete is working with Tad Montgomery in Lebanon and their counterpart in Hartford to put out a bid to potential vendors for creating an EV plan. Ben commented on the issue of building codes and EV charges. There is resistance to having a local building code that is different from the state building code. Folks in Hanover often voluntarily address issues like energy efficiency and the installation of EV chargers; perhaps there is no need to change the local building code.

Bill asked if the issue of chargers also shows up in zoning issues? Pete responded that it might be possible to require commercial buildings be wired for chargers, even if chargers are not installed.

Julia noted that \$50,000 was approved last week in the Town parking budget to install charging stations.

Hanover Zoning Ordinance

Due to her recent personal experience getting a variance, Judi feels it is time to revisit the Hanover Zoning Ordinance through the lens of energy efficiency. Folks at the last Sustainable Hanover meeting thought we should create a task force to look into this. Rob Houseman has agreed to be on the task force. Julia suggested Judi defer to Rob about participation from others.

School Board Election

It is very good news for SH-Energy that Deb Nelson was recently elected to the school board. A few folks will connect with her (Judi, Yolanda, Linda?) to discuss how we can best move the sustainability needle in our schools.

Other Business

April noted that Elizabeth Wilson has stepped down as director of the Irving Institute.

Marjorie asked whether or not we should have another solarize campaign this year and recommended putting this topic on next month's agenda. Julia thinks continuing the program makes sense given the funding streams for renewables that are supposed to begin flowing out of Washington.

Respectfully submitted by Robin Kaiser, 3/21/22