

Meeting Minutes

July 16, 2025

Attending: SHC Members – Yolanda Baumgartner, Judi Colla, Jennie Chamberlain, Catherine Reike, Lynn Sheldon, Susan Edwards, Marcus Welkins, Barbara Callaway, Judith Reeve, Dennis Robison, Gail Gentes; Energy Committee-Robin Kaiser; Rob Houseman (Town Manager), Peter Kulbacki (Public Works Director); Guests: Jeff Hamilton, Judy Payne, Emily Monroe, Paul Gerke, Simone Whitecloud (Dartmouth Sustainability), Paul Bemis (ASHRAE Building Code Project)

1. Minutes: The minutes of the June 18, 2025 SHC Meeting were distributed with thanks to Gail Gentes for filling in as secretary. Any corrections or additions should be sent to Gentes and Baumgartner by July 21, 2025.

2. Town Manager Update: Rob Houseman.

The Sustainability Director position remains open. Previous applications are being reviewed. Following the June SH meeting, Houseman, Colla and Baumgartner visited the Sustainability Park to review maintenance concerns. Houseman reminded everyone that the original concept of the park was that maintenance would be the responsibility of SHC volunteers, not Town staff. Over the years, this has proven unworkable and now is under Parks and Recreation.

Consideration is being given to different, low maintenance plantings such as ground cover to minimize upkeep. Catherine Rieke will update Judith Reeve about these developments. Susan Edwards will also assist.

3. Requests for SHC as Co-sponsor: Yolanda Baumgartner.

SHC has been given opportunities to co-sponsor events. Events cannot be posted on the SHC website unless co-sponsoring is approved. Requests currently pending:

- UV EV Expo: Saturday, September 6, 11:00 am-4:00 pm at the Hartford VT Town Hall. The committee agreed to co-sponsor. Particular promotions will be determined.
- SUN DAY: - National Day to support renewables, September 21. A multi community team including Norwich, Lyme, Thetford, and Hanover is planning a local Sun Day celebrating wind and solar, moving away from fossil fuels. Judy Payne offered to write an article for the *Summer Newsletter*. The committee agreed to co-sponsor.
- Local Solutions Conference (September 18-19th at Dartmouth) - Judi Colla shared more information regarding attendance fees. Because SHC pledged \$500 to help support the event, it will be entitled to two free attendees. Marcus Welkins reported that Eric Klinenberg (NYU) will be a keynote speaker.

4. CPCNH Update: Peter Kulbacki

The new rates have been posted. The process has been complex due to the utilities being encouraged by the PUC to lower rates by increasing the riskiness of their supply purchasing. .. CPCNH's reserves were diminished because of the cold winter and an underestimation of the volume needed. Steps have been taken to improve forecasting. CPCNH is moving its headquarters to Concord and exploring new executive leadership structures. It is also involved in a 5 megawatt solar project in Warner in the Eversource service territory. Because discussion exceeded the time available at this meeting, it was suggested a dedicated meeting be offered for everyone interested in taking a deeper dive into CPCNH topics. Yolanda Baumgartner will set a time/date.

5. Reports:

- July 4th Parade: There was a good turnout with many stopping by the SHC tables. SHC won first place in the parade which included a \$300 prize. This offset most of the expenses. Brian Edwards won the questionnaire prize.
- Waste Reduction: Lynn Sheldon.

The Yard Sale (August 30) planning is underway. Volunteers are needed. Susan Edwards will be making phone calls.

Apparel Impact has contacted SHC wanting to have a meeting. Marcus Welkins noted that they are having good results on the Dartmouth campus.

Recycling glass at Public Works is causing issues as people are leaving trash and hazardous waste. Baumgartner suggested asking the Communications team to consider ways to reduce contamination and preserve this recycling service.

Newsletter Summer issue deadline will be August 29th. Possible topics suggested; July 4 parade with pictures, upcoming Clean Energy New Hampshire event and fund raising.

5. ASHRAE Building Code Project (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) Paul Bemis:

Bemis is a member of ASHRAE and Governor's Advocate for promoting energy efficiency in buildings. He noted that New Hampshire's code requirements date to the 2018 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) which do not require testing for compliance. He is advocating for adaptation of the 2024 Standards including testing. Regrettably the State Building Code Review Board, which he stated is highly influenced by builders with no representation from the public, is reluctant to pursue these new standards because they are of the opinion that this will significantly increase the building costs. This apparently is debatable and not based on NH construction but out of state models. Bemis suggests that the costs would be less than their estimates and easily recovered by energy savings due to code requirements. There is also controversy relating to the use of electricity vs. fossil fuels for energy sources. Bemis has formed a group advocating for the consumer by setting up a model that is NH based using the 2024 standard. He is approaching the SHC for support in this endeavor. Several options were discussed e.g., education programs, an article in the *Newsletter*, etc.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Robison, Secretary