

Minutes of Monthly Meeting
Sustainable Hanover - Energy Initiative
Tuesday, August 9, 2022
Via Zoom

Attending: Yolanda Baumgartner, Barb Callaway, Reed Cole, Judi Colla, Andrew Hatch, Robin Kaiser, Sarah Kelly, Peter Kulbacki, Tad Montgomery, Dennis Robison, Marjorie Rogalski, Ben Steele and Rob Taylor

Introductions

Reed Cole, a Dartmouth student in Sarah Kelly's Energy & Justice clinic, introduced herself.

Minutes

There were no minutes for June (joint meeting with Sustainable Hanover) and July (canceled due to COVID).

Announcements/Upcoming Events

Judi mentioned the next Sustainable Hanover meeting will take place Aug 17 from 8:30-10:00 am. Dartmouth College's Vice President of Campus Services and Institutional Projects Josh Keniston will share information about the college's plans to build a North Campus Housing project on Lyme Rd. Discussion will focus on sustainability issues.

Judi also mentioned the Sustainable Hanover community yard sale on the Dewey Parking lot on Sept 3 and asked those who wish to volunteer to be in touch with Susan Edwards.

Updates and Brief Discussions

Sarah Kelly said her Energy & Justice Clinic has almost finished a report on ways to make community power more inclusive and equitable. She predicted submission of a report in two weeks.

Another project she mentioned is research into how to market the community power idea to communities in the "north country" of New Hampshire. Reed Cole described a slide deck she is assembling on community power for north country towns.

Dennis requested a copy to summarize for inclusion in the summer newsletter before its Aug 19 deadline.

Someone mentioned that Lebanon's Clifton Below, John Chafee and Woody Rothe are meeting to discuss concerns that, due to difficulties paying rising rent, electric, oil and gas bills, Lebanon may face a surge in homelessness and cutoffs of power and fuel in the coming months.

Communications

Judi said she and Stowe Beam are due to speak to the local Rotary Club about Sustainable Hanover and the potential for collaboration.

Dennis said submissions for the summer newsletter are due Aug 19th. He plans to write a question and answer item in the summer newsletter based on Pete Kulbacki's reports on the progress of the community power project.

Renewable Electricity

Community Power Coalition of NH:

Pete Kulbacki reported CPCNH has finished interviewing candidates for portfolio manager. He has spent about 100 hours in calls and meetings on the project over the past month and a half, in an effort to be ready to go live next February if it can beat the utility default rate. A plan will be submitted shortly to the CPCNH board of directors. He said Hanover will have to modify its energy plan. CPCNH will need to hire staff soon. The coalition now includes 20 communities. He concluded that lots of opportunities remain that could derail community power, but "cool stuff is happening."

Large Users:

Pete added that there may be things that CPCNH can do with large users, such as aggregating Hanover's power purchase agreement customers with others from outside Hanover.

Local Solar:

Yolanda said she has prepared a step-by-step manual on how to register with the state to obtain Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) for the electricity production from private home solar arrays. She noted that Rob Taylor has written a companion description of how to hire companies to monitor solar production and sell the RECs, paying cash to the solar array owners.

Rob explained that currently, many small solar operators fail to register and claim their RECs, which enables utilities to "sweep" 14 percent of the unused RECs, which reduces the amount of renewable energy they need to buy under the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard.

Peter Kulbacki agreed to be the guinea pig who will test these manuals, though he worried that he might need to buy a new meter to sell RECs, which might wipe out any financial benefit. Rob said he earned \$100 for selling his RECs for the first quarter of this year (the darkest quarter) and said such earnings could pay for a new meter before long.

Asked why she preferred not to sell RECs, Yolanda said that keeping them out of the market would help sustain the price of other RECs to benefit other solar homes.

Tad Montgomery requested a copy of the manuals, and Yolanda agreed, cautioning that they were not for wide distribution until tested.

Marjorie said she registered as an Eversource customer and she will look into taking her RECs out of circulation.

Yolanda promised to circulate the manuals to the committee and consider an outreach program to inform others once it has been successfully tested.

Barb Callaway suggested selling RECs and plowing the proceeds back into encouraging new solar construction.

Schools:

Yolanda noted that she has tried for years to encourage the local school system to make energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements. Individuals were receptive, but nothing has happened. Tonight she and Judi are making a pitch to the SAU School Board, requesting a policy embracing for the school district the Ready for 100 goals adopted by the Town in 2017.

They are also considering writing an article for the school warrant supporting the R4100 goals in the school district. She noted that similar initiatives have passed easily at town meeting.

Buildings – Efficiency/Heating/Cooling

Streetlights:

Pete said the town is waiting for the Department of Energy to give a signal.

Commercial/Industrial/Municipal:

Andrew has been developing a fairly “expansive” program for New Hampshire Saves. He mentioned his work on a new patient tower at Dartmouth Health and regrets not being involved with the new Irving building and computer science center or the design of the renovation for the Hopkins Center at Dartmouth. These projects are designed and built by professionals from outside the area.

Window Dressers:

Dennis said a team is being assembled to build 271 window inserts October 14 to 19. Eleven volunteers are needed for each shift.

Yolanda said this group will make some inserts for low income homes in Lebanon, as well as Hanover and Norwich. She added that the workforce will need supervisors and soup makers, too.

Transportation/Mobility

Ben is reviewing electric buses. Pete said a lot of options are being considered for installing EV chargers. Tad said the VT law school is helping towns write requests for proposals for EV charger installations.

Yolanda said e-bikes were cut from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) as passed by the U.S. Senate. Sen. Jean Shaheen (D-NH) called it a lower priority than roads and bridges.

Other Business

Judi suggested we get a speaker to explain what’s in the IRA bill for our next meeting. Others suggested staffers from Sens. Shaheen or Hassan’s offices.

Barb said we might coordinate with the new town manager, Alex Torpey, on a newsletter, since he’s authoring some kind of blog.

Judi is going to start rotating the task of writing minutes every second month; Rob Taylor will continue to do the alternate months.

Next meeting is scheduled for Sept 13 at 1:30 on Zoom.

Submitted by Rob Taylor