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The Town of Hanover Urged New Hampshire to Improve its Ten-year Energy Strategy.

By Rob Taylor

Invited to comment on a 2018 state strategy, Hanover called attention to the rising cost-effectiveness of renewable energy, the potential to create new, renewable energy jobs, and, above all, the need for climate change mitigation.

Churned out on short notice by members of Sustainable Hanover's Energy Subcommittee, the document called for major changes in the 2018 strategy. Town Manager Julia Griffin sent it on to the OSI June 22.

The critique, Griffin said, was "a reflection of our commitment that NH does not get left behind in this nation's response to climate change."

The initial ten-year state strategy was launched in 2014 with a set of progressive recommendations on upgrading New Hampshire's electric grid and moving toward renewable energy. In 2018, Republican operatives in Concord redirected the strategy to place almost all emphasis on cost-effectiveness and maintaining free markets. Its sole reference to climate change came in a sentence that said no preferences or subsidies should be used to encourage any particular energy sector. It protested that more ambitious renewable energy goals of

neighboring states were pushing up the cost of electricity for New Hampshire ratepayers. It said natural gas-fired electricity and gasoline autos would be dominant for the foreseeable future.

This year, the state Office of Strategic Initiatives proposed to revise and update the strategy, as required by statute. Like Hanover, many towns and Clean Energy New Hampshire filed analyses and recommendations.

In Hanover, a scramble to evaluate the strategy started in May. Griffin and the Sustainable Hanover Committee told the energy subcommittee they wanted the town to weigh in on the strategy rewrite. Hanover had worked for years to help launch the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire, which hopes to buy wholesale electricity from renewable power sources. Hanover had also been one of the first towns to endorse the Sierra Club's "Ready for 100" drives to renewable electricity by 2030 and renewable heating and transportation by 2050. And the town offices and facilities were on the verge of producing almost all of their energy needs from solar panels. Hanover wanted to be a leader on energy policy.

Subcommittee members agreed that the 2018 strategy was lopsided, and seven members volunteered to work on a response. Subcommittee chair Yolanda Baumgartner initially called for sending two pages of comment, but the group quickly roared past that target. In the end, they produced a 14-page filing with 32 footnotes. The leading points were as follows:

1. Climate Change Mitigation: This should be one of the top goals of any state energy strategy; it was ignored in the 2018 strategy.

2. Cost-effectiveness:

A worthy goal; but should not be considered too narrowly.

3. Energy Markets:

These are evolving. Renewable energy is often the cheapest electricity available, even compared to heavily subsidized fossil fuels. And temporary subsidies and preferences for renewables may prove useful to accelerate the transition to an affordable, low-carbon-emission future.

4. Energy Efficiency:

New Hampshire should promptly pursue cost-effective paths to raise energy efficiency in buildings, which has been neglected.

5. Transportation:

The automotive fleet is already shifting from internal combustion engines (ICEs) to electric-powered vehicles, and automakers are planning to phase out ICEs. New Hampshire should assure availability of charging stations. Transportation efficiency also calls for more public transit, park-and-rides and bike lanes.

6. Growing the New Economy:

To stay appealing to companies, skilled workers, residents and tourists, New Hampshire should join neighboring states in setting targets for renewable energy.

Each of these priorities was buttressed with details on what needs to be done and how to do it. Among these were updating building construction energy codes, funding weatherization programs, setting higher targets for buying renewable energy and shrinking greenhouse gas emissions, and supporting wind farm development in the Gulf of Maine.

Drafters included Robin Kaiser, April Salas, Ben Steele, Marjorie Rogalski, Lori Siegel and Rob Taylor. Baumgartner oversaw the effort, added recommendations and refined drafts while visiting her grandchildren. It took a village. But as the state is in the process of reorganizing energy agencies in a new department, to date OSI has issued no new strategy.

Breaking news: as this issue of the *Newsletter* is in its final edit, Yolanda Baumgartner, Co-Chair of the Sustainable Hanover Committee reported “I met Mark Sanborn interim deputy commissioner for the new DOE last month, and asked him about the

status of the strategic update given the OSI transition to DOE. He said it is in the top 4 or 5 of the to-do's and will be done by year-end because it is mandated.”



Sustainable Hanover at the Farmers Market

By Ben Steele, Transportation Committee

The Sustainable Hanover Committee hosted four booths at the July 21 Hanover Farmers Market. It was a chance to publicize a few of the programs to an audience that might not see them elsewhere. We highlighted electric vehicles (EV's), e-bikes, and both of our solar partners - Solaflect and Revision Energy. In addition, there was information on weatherization and Window Dressers window inserts.

Four electric vehicle owners brought their cars and strategically parked in a row behind vendor tents. There were two Teslas - a Model 3, the more affordable sedan, and a Model Y, an SUV, a less expensive model than the well-known Model S, which can cost upwards of \$80,000. Two Chevrolet Bolt owners brought their cars and fielded a lot of





questions. Plug-in hybrids were represented by a Toyota Rav4 Prime, which gets up to 42 miles in full electric mode before the hybrid motor kicks in, and a Volkswagen ID.4, the newly released full-size SUV.

Over ten e-bikes were on show, representing a wide diversity of models. One of the Chevy Bolt owners brought his recumbent tricycle which he had converted to an e-bike with a kit that is available to any user. The Town of Hanover displayed its recently purchased a Rad Runner Plus, a utility bike that is used by town employees for trips around town. That bike has small wide wheels and a large luggage rack. The other bikes included sturdier, heavier models and lighter faster ones. Yolanda Baumgartner, co-chair of Sustainable Hanover, brought her 30-year-old hybrid bicycle which was converted to an e-bike with the addition of a Copenhagen Wheel in 2016.

Both Solaflect and Revision Energy had information and materials on solar panels. The Solaflect solar tracker on a trailer generated just enough solar energy on a partly sunny day to bake chocolate chip cookies in their solar powered oven. The smell of warm cookies attracted quite a crowd.

More than thirty people wandered around the cars and bikes and chatted with their owners. Others visited the solar panel booths (although maybe some of them came for the cookies). Some were EV or e-bike owners themselves who came to visit with like-thinking owners. Others were interested in seeing the cars and bikes and finding out more about them. One Bolt owner reported that a woman he talked to was going to head right over to the Chevy dealer. For the members of Sustainable Hanover, it was a chance to see each other in person, after a year of Zoom meetings. A Fall return visit to the Farmer's Market is being considered.

While most car manufacturers plan to phase out gas powered cars in the next 10-15 years, and the Biden administration infrastructure plan includes funding for more public chargers, we still need to convince more drivers to convert to electric vehicles, or make shorter trips on an e-bike in order to meet the Ready for 100 goals of fully renewable transportation by 2050 that was adopted by the Town in 2017, and to reduce greenhouse gas emission in order to limit climate change. This was one more step in the process. If you are interested in more information about electric vehicles, email Ben Steele (bsteele@colby-sawyer.edu)



Town Employees Ride An E-Bike

By Yolanda Baumgartner

The Town of Hanover has its first all-electric vehicle. It is an electric bicycle for local trips by town staff. The e-bike is a no-emission transportation option because the little electricity it takes to recharge the e-bike's battery is generated by the solar panels on the roof of Town Hall.

Town building inspector Ryan Borokowski has made thousands of trips around town over his 22 year career in Hanover. These days Ryan is happy to grab a bike helmet instead of car keys for many of his appointments in Hanover and Etna. Self-described as "a guy who hasn't ridden a bike in 20 years", Ryan is enthusiastic about the convenience, time savings, and health benefits of e-biking. It's a big time-saver to pedal right up to his destination without hunting for a parking space. The wide tires are good on roads and construction sites. Ryan

appreciates having a choice of power levels, including one that gets him up Hanover's biggest hills without arriving tired and sweaty. A basket on the back holds all his paperwork and construction hard hat securely.

Ryan reports it was Rob Houseman, Planning and Zoning Director, who selected the Rad Runner Plus as a good all-purpose e-bike that can be shared by multiple staff members. For example, on one trip to a Sustainable Hanover event at the Richmond Middle School, this e-bike was ridden by a six foot-plus rider in one direction and by a barely five foot rider going the other way. Experienced cyclist Senior Planner Vicki Smith said "the bike has some 'giddy-up' and is stable, easy and fun to use."

Nationally, many local governments are finding ways to use e-bikes to reduce operating costs, help achieve climate and sustainability goals, improve employee health and promote positive community relations. Police departments are adopting e-bikes to add versatility and effectiveness to their bike patrols. Some cities, such as Madison, WI, have begun to test electric pedal-assist cargo bikes as car and small utility truck replacements. Is the Rad Runner the start of a municipal e-bike fleet for Hanover? Rob Houseman reports that the town is keeping track of usage and costs. Those results will inform future planning.



Madison WI recycling cargo ebike



Why Weatherize?

By Barbara Callaway

The newly released **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** report is a scary wake-up call. The report makes clear that we need to make immediate changes in our energy use and greenhouse gas emissions or face disastrous consequences.

Energy efficiency improvements may not seem as glamorous and "sexy" as solar and wind power or carbon capture, but when done in old as well as new buildings, they have a surprisingly large impact on energy usage. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, 40% of the energy used in the U.S. is for home and commercial buildings. DOE writes that "by combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with appropriate insulation, air sealing, and thermostat settings, homeowners can cut their energy use for heating and cooling from 20% to 50%".¹ One study found that energy savings pay off the cost of home weatherization improvements in northern U.S. climates within two or three years.² That is cost effective!

Weatherization is not disruptive or difficult. By weatherizing your home, you not only save money on your energy bills, but you are more comfortable in your home in summer and winter. What is more, the improved air quality in your home may help with allergies and asthma. Weatherization not only seals up leaks, it also ensures adequate ventilation, so important in this era of COVID. Weatherization is not "the answer" but it is an action that has immediate positive repercussions.

A friend of mine who is a "numbers guy" and pays close attention to the return on his investments, found that in the first year after he weatherized, his

¹ *Why Energy Efficiency Upgrades*, www.energy.gov/eere/why-energy-efficiency-upgrades

² efm.princeton.edu/pubs/BradshawThesis%20FINAL.pdf

oil usage was down 17% and electricity fell 21%, resulting in a cash savings of \$344.

A number of Hanover residents like my friend have already weatherized. *Weatherize Hanover* can put you in touch with others who are willing to share their experiences. For more information, go to sustainablehanovernh.org, click on “Energy” and then on “Weatherization” to learn more.

Mark your calendar for September 23rd from 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm. *Weatherize Hanover* will be sponsoring a zoom called “Button Up” with lots of information on what weatherization is and how to go about it. More information will follow.

Community Climate Connections (C3) -Neighborhoods Working Together

By Rebecca Kivam Paquette

A long time ago (or so it seems) Hanover held a real Fourth of July parade with the whole community assembled, maskless, on Main Street. It was 2019. If you were there, you may remember a group of folks pushing and riding electric lawnmowers and then setting up a show-and-tell exhibit on the Green to share information with parade spectators. That was one of the first community education events by “C3,” or Community Climate Connections, a subcommittee of Sustainable Hanover.

The group was formed a few years ago to raise awareness of what people can do to help reach Hanover’s Ready for 100 goals: 100% renewable energy for electricity by 2030, and 100% renewable energy for transportation and housing by 2050.

Since before the pandemic we began organizing informative programs on climate change mitigation, including some “Climate Conversations” on topics like recycling plastics and repurposing unwanted fabric items. We’ve also been helping to promote Sustainable Hanover’s “Solarize Hanover” and “Weatherize Hanover” programs.

Also, if you subscribe to the Hanover or Upper Valley Listserv, you may have noticed some of our “Who Knew?” pieces reminding readers of things they can do to save energy and protect our planet. All of our members write them. Here’s a recent one I sent:

Who knew? As we approach gardening season, it’s good to think about how we can reduce some of our household trash and put it to good use in the soil. I recently saw a newsletter article from Earth 911 about weird things that you can compost. Here are a few:

- Cotton balls (100% cotton).
- Q-Tips - only the ones that have paper stems.
- Coffee grounds and paper filters.
- Stale food like crackers, pasta, and spices past their expiration date. No meats.
- Vacuum cleaner dust. Everywhere. But what a great idea!
- Fur and hair: Are you acting as your family’s pandemic barber? Or brushing big tufts of fur off a shedding dog? Or two shedding dogs, like me? It’s all compostable.
- And my personal favorite: natural (not plastic) wine corks. I cut them into 3 or 4 slices hoping they’ll compost faster.

For more ideas and info, check out www.earth911.com

C3 has come together as a real community of volunteers. Our goals are to keep the community informed about all the things that Sustainable Hanover does and to share ideas about what we all can do to mitigate the effects of climate change. Keeping the earth safe for future generations will take an effort by everyone to change many of our collective and individual choices and practices. If you’re interested in joining us in this work, please contact our chair, Barbara Callaway: bcallaway65@gmail.com



Senior Stewards Acting for the Environment (SSAFE)³

By Dennis Robison

In early 2020, Kendal at Hanover resident Margaret Powell called together several fellow residents to discuss common concerns about climate

³ (www.seniorstewardsactingfortheenvironment.org)

change, the environment and what they, as senior citizens, might do about it. They contacted twelve of the Kendal continuing care retirement community affiliates to see if there was interest in forming an even larger group of those of a certain age who shared similar concerns and were anxious for action. Indeed, they discovered that eight of them were ready and willing to join together. By December they had formed the basic organizational structure and settled on the name *Senior Stewards Acting for the Environment (SSAFE)*. Further, they sent a letter to the Kendal Corporation supported by 500 residents requesting the Board to “(1) support and encourage each Kendal affiliate to set carbon reduction goals, such as cutting emissions by at least 50% by 2030 and achieving net carbon neutrality no later than 2050; (2) help establish interim benchmarks and monitoring systems to measure progress; and (3) seek ways to assist each Kendal affiliate to achieve these goals and targets.” While the Board has yet to formally adopt these goals, there has been strong support from key members at the corporate level.

Interest, enthusiasm and progress has grown, organized around three objectives – greening of individual campuses, advocacy and education. Each Kendal is independent of all the others, “resting on its own bottom” as it were. However communications between them at the administrative level has been critical and productive. SSAFE members are finding that this is also true at the resident level. However, because of SSAFE’s intent to advocate at local, state and the federal levels for climate actions, the organization is independent and not a part of either the Kendal Corporation or any of its affiliates, thus protecting Kendal’s 501(c3) status. It also is looking forward to welcoming senior citizens who are not a part of any Kendal.

“Greening of the campuses” is a very local effort to encourage each Kendal unit to do its best to reduce the campus carbon footprint through energy efficiency, creating and maintaining green spaces such as developing arboreta, recycling, etc. Advocacy involves providing information on climate related issues, particularly but not limited to local and state legislation and policies. For example, Hanover’s SSAFE has been active in supporting issues identified by the Sustainable Hanover Committee during the past New Hampshire

legislative year and is currently monitoring developments in the U.S. Congress.

All of these efforts are predicated on an informed membership. Those charged with educating SSAFE members are engaged in providing an in-depth understanding of the issues and inspiring positive and effective actions in support of change.

In a recent Osher summer lecture, environmentalist Bill McKibben noted the importance of citizen action and climate change. He announced that his current effort is to get senior citizens collectively organized through a movement he calls 3rd Act. It is a recognition that this generation has been beneficiaries of wealth generated from fossil fuels and is morally obligated to take action on behalf of their children, grandchildren and generations into the future. SSAFE looks forward to becoming a proud part of this effort.

