

Town of Essex
Energy Committee
Minutes

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

7:00 PM - Via Zoom Only

Present: Will Dodge (chair), Phil March, Michael Fink, Tom Yandow, Dottie Bergendahl, Natalee Braun, David Skopin, Irene Wrenner

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Approval of meeting minutes from January 19, 2022 with changes.
- Discussion regarding stipends.

SUBSTANTIVE

1. CCRPC Energy Committee Round Table

Natalee, David, and Irene all attended the event on January 31, 2022; other members watched the recording. A discussion ensued regarding the key takeaways, including: (1) ingenuity of other committees (e.g., Richmond committee for ARPA spending decisions, So. Burlington local climate action plan); (2) complicated nature of the Climate Action Plan; (3) difficulty in selecting New England Grid over Hydro Quebec; (4) Underhill energy committee free audits with thermography; (5) hiring full time energy coordinators (incl. for selling a home); (6) confusion on best means of using energy committees in implementation of Climate Action Plan; and (7) revolving loan funds.

A separate discussion was had regarding the mechanics of ARPA fund selection with Essex, with the conclusion that at the moment Tom Yandow and DPW have already worked to determine key priorities (including Memorial Hall crawl space, Police Dept. windows).

Natalee also discussed various bills she is tracking separately for 250, with emphasis on Green Justice, Clean Heat Standard, and Low-Income Weatherization.

Action Items: **A.** Invite members of Jericho / Underhill EC to meet in order to share ideas on how to work together on common goals. **B.** Subcommittee for full time energy coordinator for

Essex. **C.** Obtain information regarding So. Burlington Revolving Loan Fund.

2. Subcommittee Concept and Potential Topics

The Committee Members discussed various ideas / iterations of how best to form and use subcommittees. After an extended discussion, the action items below were agreed upon for consideration at or before the next meeting. There was also a discussion of an inter-committee meeting with Essex Housing to discuss ARPA dollars for EV chargers and weatherization for new low income housing.

Action Items: (1) Consider and (if approved) form one or more of the following subcommittees (with volunteers needed):

- Events and Outreach
- Weatherization
- FT Energy Coordinator (starting with job description)
- Renewable Projects
- Transportation

(2) Natalee to serve as **Legislative Affairs Liaison** based on bill monitoring.

(3) Irene to serve as **Municipal Monitoring Liaison** (i.e., to notify members what's taking place on Essex Committees, and when members should show up to attend).

3. VECAN 2022 Efficiency for Low Income Vermonts Workshop

Phil recounted a presentation from VECAN with a demographic focus on low income Vermonters and energy costs, focusing on the high energy cost burden thresholds, incentives such as free refrigerators, freezers, washers, dehumidifiers, A/C and heat pump. The appliance replacement project appeared to be the most promising. Other focus included the OEOs and other weatherization agencies focusing on heat pump incentives, and other incentives that we have reviewed and discussed below.

4. Dandelion Geothermal Webinar

The Energy Committee members reviewed the webinar organized by Michael Fink which had roughly 24 people attend and which included a very helpful demonstration and discussion of how geothermal is installed, the incentives within Vermont (and their relatively low amount as compared to New York state), the importance of communities having a hiatus on installing natural gas, and the limitations (i.e., only works on forced air system). The Committee also thanked Regional Coordinator Ann Janda for spreading the word to the other energy committees to join.

5. Town Meeting / Legislative Forum

Phil recounted that at the last meeting, there was confusion among the legislators regarding the funding for low income weatherization through Efficiency Vermont.

6. Energy Storage Webinar

Dottie discussed her takeaways at a recent seminar focused on GMP peak shaving, which resulted in \$3m in savings in 2021 through the BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) program with Tesla batteries. Dottie discussed her satisfaction with the Tesla battery she installed at her residence.

Action Item : Consider (perhaps through Outreach) to spread the word to more businesses in Essex re: the benefits of signing up for battery storage.

Motion to adjourn accepted.

Next Meeting : March 9, 2022 at 7:00 PM