

WALLINGFORD ENERGY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the February 13, 2018 Meeting

Ken Welch called the meeting to order at 6:35. Present: John Armstrong, Nick Benjamin, Doug Blodgett, Ken Welch and Jay White.

The committee approved the January minutes.

Rutland Herald article about RRPC plan. Several members asked whether it was correct that the DPS had rejected RRPC's plan. John reported on a phone conversation with Barbara Noyes-Pulling of RRPC. "Not true," she explained. "Yes, DPS had some questions, and yes, we're responding to them. We're also working with the Herald to set the record straight."

Solar Panel Tariffs. Ralph asked Nick what effect he thought the Trump administration's plan to put a tariff on imported solar panels might have. Neck acknowledged that it would slow things down for awhile but not change the long term outlook for the industry. Doug mentioned a recent [news story about the loss of 232 installer jobs in Vermont](#).

Enhanced Energy Plan. There was a discussion about the purpose of the new energy plan. John described it as public education. Ken disagreed. "It's a manual, something that directs interested people to other sources of information." Jay didn't think this would be sufficient. "If the Town wants to get substantial deference before the PUC we need to show that we have identified enough sites for renewable energy generation to meet targets assigned by the state energy plan. You have to demonstrate this by doing detailed mapping."

John pointed out that this means recruiting property owners who might be open to proposals. "Can we give people at least ballpark estimates of what kind of money an owner might expect, for example, from a project covering an acre or two?" Nick had reservations about this. "You don't want to create expectations that can't be met. Every project has different costs and therefore different returns. I think you just have to let people know that there are opportunities and that if they're open to offers, they just might get one they like."

Nick went on to explain that inclusion on the enhanced energy plan map does not obligate the owner to develop the land, but omission from the map may make it difficult, if not impossible, to develop the property.

Doug suggested beginning by identifying properties that could be developed with little or no impact on scenic resources on quality of life. "The quarry off Creek Road is an obvious example. We need to find others and reach out to the land owners,"

There was a lively discussion about how to review the RRPC maps designating primary and secondary resources in Wallingford and match these to plats and therefore to owners. The [GIS maps RRPC uses](#) have a plat layer. Nick agreed to contact RRPC about how to capture this information.

John offered to write the enhanced plan. "I can get the committee a detailed outline in time for the April meeting and a draft by June. This should put us in good shape to adjust our plan to the PSD-approved regional plan which RRPC expects to have by the summer. And yes, the plan will cover all of the energy issues, not just solar but also conservation, building efficiency, transportation and aspects of land use."

"Sounds like we're developing a plan," Ken concluded. "But let's not get too excited. It's still rudimentary." Ken asked John to get things started by posting a notice on Front Porch Forum asking interested landowners to step forward.

The discussion turned to practical details. Should we divide the town into sectors and go out singly or in pairs to canvass owners? What role can the listers play? Doug suggested that we just walk our neighborhoods. "Look at all that red and purple land just behind your house, Ken."

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40. The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 6 at 6:30.

— Submitted by John Armstrong