

WALLINGFORD ENERGY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the December 5, 2017 Meeting

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

Jay moved that the November minutes be approved as written. Doug seconded the motion. There was no objection.

The Energy Forum.

Ken: "I have a comment. Yes, solar is the sexy part, but the program needs to cover the entire plan: transportation, building efficiency, everything."

Jay: "But Ken, you've seen the slide show. John distributed it last spring and it's about what we need to do as a town to get standing before the Public Utility Commission."

Doug: "And you have to have focus. Solar siting is what people are worried about."

Nick: "I have a question: will the town do the development? Because there's a problem with being over-prescriptive. In California there was a process of mapping that generated planning documents without the participation of property owners or energy developers and it was not well received. Shouldn't we just set some standards of what kinds of areas we will support for development?"

John: "Nothing will happen without owner participation and developer investment. None of the layers of state government — not the state, not the region, obviously not the town — has development resources. We will, however, be required to have some level of specificity about our preferred and prohibited locations."

Ken: "The main thing I'm hoping we can get out of the meeting is a sense of which owners are interested in development."

Jay: "I don't think it's just up to the owner. The neighbor needs to be involved. I want solar on my property — but what will my neighbor think?"

Ken: "Anyway, this meeting needs to be it. I don't want to do any additional ones."

John: "But this is a process, Ken. You can't do it all in one meeting."

Jay: "That's right. First we need to explain substantial deference and ask whether the town should proceed. Tinmouth decided not to. They believe they have enough protections in place."

Nick: "I sure hope so because they may wind up being vulnerable."

John: "I think that once people know that we can do what the state wants us to do by finding 75 to 100 acres in the town to develop over the next 30 years, it won't look so cataclysmic."

Doug: "Particularly if we can provide some benign siting examples such as the quarry."

Ken: "Or on rooftops such as the True Temper factory or on the dollar store."

John: "The more I think about Doug's idea of developing out of the way forest land, the more I like it. If we could find people to put solar on 50 or 60 acres of forest and 20 or 30 acres at the quarry, we'd only need to find about 20 acres somewhere else in the town to meet our production goal."

Ken: "But before we push this idea too hard we should contact the Forest Supervisor."

Doug: "It's true, public land comes with many restrictions."

Nick: "But there's a process for everything."

[According to the most recent (2006) [Green Mountain Forest Land Management and Resource Plan](#), only 49% of the land within the Forest Proclamation Boundary is actually owned by the federal government. The rest remains in private hands. It would be interesting to see how this division of ownership applies to forest lands in Wallingford.]

Ken: One thing I learned when I was with the Heat Squad is to present things as opportunities. We need to find people who want to take advantage of solar opportunities and when we're at the meeting, we need to make a point of getting a list of people who see solar opportunities — and another list of people who say 'No way!'"

John: "The point of RRPC's maps is to show where the opportunities are. The role of the town is to refine those maps by adding local knowledge and local preferences."

Nick: "We should also explain that developers have ways of mitigating the impact of these projects."

Ken: "Nick, will you be at the meeting? As a solar developer, you can give people ideas about what's possible."

Nick: "I'd have to think about that. I don't want to be coming in as a stranger and step on peoples' toes. I mean, my projects are in the West."

Ken: "Jay, would you introduce the meeting?"

Jay: "Sure."

Ken: "Our January committee meeting is on the 9th. I think we should devote it to doing a dry run."

Nick: "This should also be a tech rehearsal. We need to do the rehearsal upstairs. We can use my projector and the town's screen."

Ralph: "Do we have handouts? Perhaps the maps?"

Ken: "Maybe the town will contribute xeroxing. We'd need 40 or 50 copies."

John: "Does the town have a color copier. The maps won't make much sense in black and white."

Ralph: "I have a color copier."

Milt: "We do, too."

John: "Should we pass out the proposed siting criteria we discussed last month?"

Doug: "A simplified version of the criteria."

Ken: "We still have three free audits to give out."

John: "By all means we should raffle them off. But we shouldn't pretend that this is the reason people will show up."

Ken: "They are, however, a reason to sign in. I'll man that booth and figure a way to make raffle tickets."

The WES Energy Dashboard.

Doug: "We've learned that the building is a big power hog. What is the threshold for peak demand charges? If it's 5 or 6kW, we hit that on weekends."

Ken: "We've done good thing in documenting those loads. We just need to take it to the next level."

Jay: "I learned from Grant Reynolds on the School Board that they are going to redo the HVAC control system."

Ken: "That's encouraging!"

Energy Plan Timeline

John explained that a [document distributed by the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies](#) contends that an enhanced energy plan can either be an integral part of a town plan or a freestanding document. "I understand that the Planning Commission is eager to meet a February deadline for filing the new town plan. There is no way we are going to be able to complete an energy section by then. For one thing, there is no approved regional energy plan nor is there an updated set of guidelines for municipalities. I therefore move that the committee state its intent to prepare the energy plan as a freestanding document following guidelines from RRPC." Ken seconded the motion. There were no objections. John also promised to follow up about this with RRPC.

[John spoke with Barbara Noyes Pulling about this. She later emailed him that going the freestanding route would require a separate approval by the selectboard, something that should be no more difficult than seeking approval of the same text as a chapter in the overall town plan.]

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50. The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 9 at 6:30.

— Submitted by John Armstrong