

WALLINGFORD ENERGY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the December 8, 2015 Meeting

Ken Welch called the meeting to order at 6:40. Present: John Armstrong, Doug Blodgett, Milton Moore, Ralph Nimtz, Ken Welch and Jay White.

November Minutes. Jay moved the adoption of the November 3 minutes. There were no objections.

Energy Committee Budget. Jay reported that the committee has a budget of \$500 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016. "If we don't spend it, we lose it. But it's the town's money." Milt was delegated to investigate the status of about \$1,500 in other funds the committee accumulated outside the budgeting process.

Completion of the WES Project. "Everything is up and running," Ralph reported. "The only thing left is to train the staff on the new systems."

John asked why the online dashboard for the school's energy systems should be password protected. Milt agreed that there is no need for a password if the site is read only.

Ken proposed recruiting the school's science teacher to interest the kids in the new systems.

New Solar Regulations. Jay reported that Act 56 specifies a 100 foot setback from any highway for arrays producing 150kW or more. For arrays producing between 15 and 150 kW, the setback is 40 feet. The act also mandates setbacks from property lines and provides new screening requirements. Ken reminded the committee that most residential solar arrays generate fewer than 15 kW and are thus unaffected by the legislation. Jay promised to discuss these issues with Ed Bove, Executive Director of the Rutland Regional Planning Commission and to report back to the committee.

Energy Plan. Jay also informed the committee that recent legislation means that town energy plans are no longer stand-alone documents that go directly to the selectboard and the public but instead simply advise the Planning Commission. Doug suggested that our submission come with a recommendation to "use this or something better."

The committee agreed to collect all draft sections and put them to a vote at the February meeting.

John asked whether the biomass section addressed wintertime air pollution. Doug pointed out that newer stoves and pellet heaters have technology that greatly reduces particulate emissions. John suggested that the plan include language to encourage residents to invest in clean biomass burners. Jay pointed out that there is a particulate emission standard for stoves and burners. Ken suggested that the committee recognize the achievements of Ames True Temper in meeting its energy needs through burning wood left over from its production of tool handles.

Community Solar. Ken reported that R. J. Adler of Suncommon would like to make a presentation at the January meeting. R. J. took over the community organizing position formerly held by Els van Woert.

There was a discussion of potential problems in putting a solar installation at the former quarry owned by Pike Industries. Ralph restated his desire that any development there be a model for responsible solar development, one that respects the the site, its vegetation and its wildlife. "The topography is really interesting and we have an opportunity to show how to do this right."

Jeff Biazuzzi, the town zoning administrator, joined this part of the discussion. (We were meeting in the clerk's office and Jeff needed to use the copier.) "Solar proposals really differ," Jeff explained. "There are good solar proposals that really answer all the questions and then there are those that are just engineer's talk. It's much easier to evaluate — and approve — the good ones."

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 8, 2016 at 6:30.

Submitted by John Armstrong.