

WALLINGFORD ENERGY COMMITTEE

Draft Minutes of the January 3, 2017 Meeting

Subject to Approval and Revision

Ken Welch called the meeting to order at 6:35. Present: John Armstrong, Ralph Nimtz, Ken Welch and Jay White.

December Minutes. Jay moved that the December minutes be approved. Ralph seconded the motion. There were no objections.

Efficiency Vermont Grant. \$1000 of the grant will fund ten audits from Neighborworks. Nine of these are in the cue and most of them will be done in January and February. Ralph has a candidate for the tenth audit.

“These audits are essentially for the building shell only,” Ken explained. “We promised that the Committee will follow up with these homeowners to explain other ways to save energy: lighting, hot water, heat sources and so forth. We’re not installing weatherstripping this time. Just consulting.”

The other \$1,500 from the grant will go toward an electrical monitoring system for the school. “We worked Christian Gilbert of PowerWise Systems to spec a [SiteSage](#) system,” John explained. “EV installed one of these in our house when we got the first heat pump and it’s worked well.” The system will monitor total building electrical usage and also a number of individual circuits such as kitchen appliances and major HVAC electrical loads. It will also monitor power output from the school’s solar panels. This can be displayed on a computer in a number of ways. The simplest will be a pair of real time dials showing electricity usage vs. generation. People can also look at where energy is being used and what has been happening for the last day, week, month and year.

“I think it’s important to know what the purpose of the system is,” John continued. “While it can provide valuable insights into how to run the building such as why we keep getting peak surcharges, it’s not a full command and control system. Its real purpose is to communicate with the community — and that includes the children. There could, for example, be a large smart TV in the hallway near the office showing usage and production.”

Jay wondered why we would need this. “Every student has a laptop. The teacher could simply instruct them to display a certain page.”

“That should happen,” Ken replied, “but I’d like to see it more in your face: here’s what’s going on right now. Kids might find ways to interact about this in ways we can’t imagine and I think we need to consult with the principal.”

Ken went on to explain that the \$1,500 from the grant will pay for a little more than half of the total installed cost of the system. In addition to the balance due to PowerWise, we’ll

need to hire an electrician and get the District IT people involved. Ken moved that the Committee use its annual \$500 budget from the Town and also as much of the \$1,400 in our bank account that may be necessary to complete the project. John seconded the motion. There was no objection.

Ken also explained that we need to coordinate this with Gary Marcy, the new Facilities Manager at the School District. "I plan to set up a meeting with Gary and the principal and whoever on the committee would like to join in. If anyone has any agenda suggestions, please let me know."

Rutland Regional Planning Commission Workshop on Act 174 Energy Planning. John attended this workshop on December 12. "As I explained in [the email I circulated](#), it was a good meeting. There was a lot of skepticism, but what I took away is that the state's energy goals of 90% renewable by 2050 really can be met. It won't be easy, but meeting these goals doesn't mean that we have to break Vermont."

John explained that what Act 174 does is tell municipalities that they can have a say in where renewable projects can be built, but that in order to get "substantial deference" before the PSB, municipalities need to develop a detailed and concrete plans showing exactly what can be built where. RRPC will set production goals for each municipality and supply computerized maps of appropriate sites for solar, wind, biomass and hydroelectric development. Town energy planners, among other things, will have to mark up these maps to show which sites are acceptable to the town. "It's like the story of the philosopher and the student. The student asks, 'Master? Am I free?' 'Yes — but you have to choose.'"

John also explained that meeting the RPC targets will not really be so difficult. "For solar, for example, we'll have to find 50 – 100 acres in the Town out of the several thousand acres the RPC will identify as 'prime solar.' If, for example, we designate Pike's abandoned quarry, the roof of the handle factory and the 'air rights' over the sewage treatment plan, we're most of the way there. The designated historic cores are easily excluded as are what planners apparently call 'viewsheds.'"

Ken asked how much these new requirements change what we've already written. Jay's conclusion was simple: "They replace what we've written."

"But now we have an assignment," John added. "We know what we need to do, and I find that liberating. I'd much rather have a real assignment than a vague idea."

Jay reminded us that we need to coordinate this effort with the Town Planning Commission. "I see Erica every Monday," he reported, "and I'll make sure she knows we're working on it."

Membership. Ken asked whether anyone knew of candidates for energy committee membership. "It would be good to have some women on the committee again. It would also be good to find people who can complement us — or be useful thorns in our sides."

Climate Presentation. Ralph said that atmospheric researcher [Alan Betts](#) will be making a presentation upstairs in the Town Hall at 6:30 on Monday, January 23, 2017. "He knows more about climate change than anyone."

"Maybe we could bring the leftover doughnuts," Ken suggested.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 7 at 6:30.

— Submitted by John Armstrong.