

WALLINGFORD ENERGY COMMITTEE

Draft Minutes of the June 4, 2019 Meeting

Subject to Approval and Revision

Ken Welch began with “some good news: the selectboard signed the electricity purchase agreement with the Hands.” Ken then called the meeting to order at 6:40. Present: John Armstrong, Doug Blodgett, Katherine MacLauchlan, Rob Stubbins, Carol Tashie, Ken Welch and Jay White.

Minutes. Doug: “I’m cool with the minutes.” Jay seconded. There was no objection.

Wallingford Day. Ken mentioned that there is an effort to get the fire department to “do one of their chicken dinner things. At \$6 it’s a deal.” John wondered about what was scheduled between a 6PM dinner and the fireworks. “It won’t get dark until 9!”

Ken asked Katherine whether the committee was on the program. She assured us we were. “The afternoon program is from 12 to 4 or 5 in the ball park.” Ken, John and Rob said they would attend with Doug responding that he would come “If I’m here.” Jay plans to be at the Rotary and Carol gave her regrets: “Too many conflicts unfortunately.”

Carol asked whether the group was interested in making bicycle-powered smoothies. “We would, of course, need materials — but first let’s find the bike.” Doug suggested beer smoothies; Carol countered with margaritas. John wondered whether that would be allowed. Katherine called the chair of the events committee and reported that “Maria says we can make margaritas with the bicycle smoothy maker.” Rob offered to bring a solar panel as a prop. “Solar panels and margaritas,” Ken commented. “We’re making progress.”

[Several days after the meeting John forwarded an email from a member of the organizing committee which suggested a rather different ball field event than what we had been discussing.]

Ken suggested we should make a poster listing energy committee projects over the years. They are:

1. The LED streetlights.

2. Grants to upgrade lighting at the town hall ...
3. ... and the town garage ...
4. ... where the committee also oversaw insulation upgrades.
5. The committee was “instrumental” in planning and passing the energy upgrade bond for the school. This included solar panels, envelope improvements, modernizing the heating system controls, installation of heat exchanges in the ventilation system and conversion of the kitchen from electric to gas appliances.
6. A series of events for promotion of residential energy audits: “Everyone understands saving money,” Ken explained, “but it’s also important to emphasize comfort.”
7. Promotion of the Wallingford Solar project on the former Pike Industries quarry, a project that will mean meeting our portion of the region’s 2025 alternative generation targets before the end of 2020. (Carol assured us that the project was under construction. “There are a lot of heavy vehicles coming and going at that site.”)
8. Obtaining grant funds for installation of a monitoring system for the school’s electrical usage.

Katherine suggested that we add an entertaining and nonsensical bullet — perhaps one about tyrannosaurus sightings.

John urged committee members to check this list in the minutes and correct any errors or omissions.

Energy Plan. Carol suggested that we have a continuously running slide show about the plan at our Wallingford Day table. John was concerned that a computer monitor might be difficult to read outdoors and suggested a poster instead.

“I have no clue about what the plan is for,” Rob commented. John promised to send the two new members copies of the latest revision.

Ken said that the list of preferred solar sites will make it easier for developers to find sites that do not compromise the town’s assets. He added that approaching the owners of

these properties now was unlikely to be useful. "People can always say 'no.' And they can also change their minds. And besides, who knows who will own which parcel in 2050?"

Ken asked whether distributed generation takes pressure off the grid. Rob answered that the opposite is true. "The current grid cannot handle a full blown distributed generation system."

When asked about the process of getting the plan approved, John reminded the committee that the planning commission has the statutory obligation to hold two public meetings about a new plan before it can be submitted to the selectboard. [John has scheduled a meeting with Erika Berner to discuss this process.]

Doug commented that this process doesn't mean that we can't talk about what we are doing. Ken said that he, for one, will be happy once the plan is finished and approved. John responded that when the plan is approved, the real work begins. "This is why we need to explore having a paid energy coordinator for the town, someone who takes this process over as a day job. I mean, however informed and committed we are, we're amateurs. It's not what we're paid to do."

Recess. Ken mentioned to Katherine that we generally do not meet in the summer. Katherine reminded Ken that she's been around this block before. "So this should be our last business meeting until September," Ken continued. "Except for one thing. We need to get together to plan what we're doing on Wallingford Day. Why don't we meet at Sal's the Thursday before at 6:30?" The committee agreed: Thursday, July 18 at Sal's and then a business meeting on Tuesday, September 10.

Reusable Shopping Bags. Katherine reported that Amazon has bags that fold up into a built in string bag and that we could get 250 of them for \$491 without printing. Doug thought it would be pointless to give out bags that don't identify who they are from. Carol reported that Sustainable Rutland is able to sell 600 to 800 burlap bags a year. She also offered to check on what a woman-owned company in New Hampshire could do for us.

Rob commented that the disposable bag bill passed the legislature and Jay added that the governor plans to sign it. Ken was of the opinion that we should spend the committee budget on the initiative. Rob promised to see what Mike Gauthier of Green Screen Graphics could do for us. [In an email, Rob reported that Gauthier would look into our needs and "see what

other giveaway sort of items might be available that would be good to put a logo/wording on if the bags are going to be really expensive or we can't find something we like."]

There was a pause. "Are we done?" John asked. Ken adjourned the meeting at 7:46. The next business meeting will be Tuesday, September 10 at 6:30 at town hall.

— Submitted by John Armstrong