

WALLINGFORD ENERGY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the November 5, 2019 Meeting

Present: Doug Blodgett,, Katherine MacLauchlan, Ralph Nimtz, Rob Stubbins, Ken Welch and Jay White. John Armstrong joined the meeting by telephone.

At 6:35, Ken broke up a lively discussion of an accident in Rutland to announce: "We're going to start, folks."

Minutes. Doug was absent in October but thought that the minutes showed that it was an interesting meeting. Rob moved adoption. There was no objection.

Fire District #1. Ken asked that we defer discussion of the energy plan. He asked Jay whether he would accompany him to a meeting of the Prudential Committee. Jay agreed. "I look on this as an opportunity," Ken continued, "to share what we can do to save Fire District subscribers some serious money. It's likely that there is equipment that needs updating. And since the district, unlike the town, uses a lot of electricity, the district could really benefit from the community solar deal Thomas Hand offered the town."

Wallingford Solar. "And speaking progress," Ken continued, "the Wallingford Solar site is remarkable. It's so peaceful."

Ralph reported talking with people whose property overlooks the project. "It's OK to them."

"To me," Ken added, "it's an award winning site. We should enter it."

Doug liked this idea. John wondered where we could enter it. "Into our own little award," Doug replied.

John wondered whether the site was open to visitors. "If you don't get caught," Ken replied. John relayed Thomas's expectation that it would be open to visitors in early December.

An Hydroelectric Opportunity in East Wallingford. There is a 150 psi water line from Wallingford Pond to the Mill River. Ken proposed that we approach the owner of this line to see whether there was interest in water powered generation. "It should be easy to permit," Ken concluded. "The water is already diverted."

Shopping Bags. Katherine wondered whether Rob had learned anything about making reusable shopping bags. Rob confessed he had dropped the ball. John mentioned that he had reviewed the 2019 minutes as a preliminary to writing the committee's annual report. "Shopping bags were a persistent theme. Not quite as exciting as bicycle powered margaritas, but persistent." Katherine commented that there was no reason to make shopping bags without an energy committee graphic. [One possibility might be the cover of the energy plan.]

Grants. Ken asked everyone to be on the lookout for grant opportunities. "You never know."

Printing the Energy Plan. John reported that a copy shop in Manchester wants \$6.50 each to print either 100 or 200 copies. There was incredulity. "You could sell them for \$10," John offered."

"And I've got some land in Florida for sale," Ken commented.

[John is investigating printing on demand where there is no need to guess how many to make since the book is not printed until someone wants to buy it. "The going price seems to be about \$4.50 a copy, half the cost of many magazines."]

Events. Ken asked about doing an energy fair. "Can we do one," he asked. "What would happen? Booths?" Rob offered to lend us some solar panels. "And one or more solar installers would welcome an opportunity for visibility."

John wondered why we were thinking of other events when we have an energy plan to explain. "What's the draw? If it's something to vote on, that's the draw." Katherine suggested that we host a meeting at someone's house. Ken reminded us that we have to put on at least two public meetings in collaboration with the Planning Commission. Katherine suggested February 25 [when John has a conflict] and a non-holiday Saturday just before town meeting day. "The meetings need to be close to the vote."

Charging Stations. Ken asked whether GMP would support the installation of chargers. Rob said the only requirement for electrical service is that you own the land. “If there’s something near a charging site for people to do,” Rob continued, “Tesla will give you the charging hardware.” John pointed out that there is a lot to do for an hour or two near the village — especially in the summer. “Take a hike. Play tennis. Go to the lake. Have lunch. Shop. It’s all within a short walk of our crossroads. And Tesla — whose Model 3 has 70% of the EV market — equips their navigation systems with maps and driving directions to chargers. There’s no need for signs.”

Communications. Katherine followed up on her proposals about communicating with people in the town from the October meeting. She suggested setting up an energy committee email address either on the town site (energy@wallingordvt.com) or at wallingfordenergy.us. “A big part of the energy plan is education and we need to make this a project of the committee. Each of us needs to think of two or more things to share. And you can recycle content. This needs to be in addition to the monthly meeting.”

Jay reminded us of our need to comply with the open meeting law. Katherine was skeptical that all we can do is meet and issue minutes. Ralph pointed out that the Conservation Commission has work projects that involve everyone “and we don’t do minutes.” Ken offered to check this out with Sandi. Katherine concluded that the town does not know us as individuals. “Messages have to come from the energy committee rather than from members.”

The Two Page Energy Plan Flyer. John explained that this should be thought of as like the preview of a movie. Jay questioned the inclusion of the electric airplane. Katherine suggested giving greater prominence to the overall goal of the plan. Doug thought the design was “kind of busy.” Katherine made some excellent design suggestions.

Ken brought things to an end at 7:40, The next meeting will be Tuesday, December 3 at 6:30 at Town Hall.

— Submitted by John Armstrong