

WALLINGFORD ENERGY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the January 7, 2020 Meeting

"It's 6:30," Ken Welch announced.."The sooner we start, the sooner we leave." Present: John Armstrong, Doug Blodgett, Katherine MacLauchlan, Ralph Nimtz, Robbie Stubbins, Carol Tashie, Ken Welch and Jay White. Carol brought Crosby, her recently adopted and typically viscous golden retriever.

Minutes. Jay moved the adoption of the December minutes; Katherine seconded. There was no objection.

Prudential Commission. Ken recalled that the committee has long offered to assist the commission in reducing the cost of the water and wastewater system in the village. Carol explained that when she and her husband moved to Wallingford, they surprised that water service here costs about \$250 a quarter compared to the \$100 a quarter that they had been paying in Rutland City. Ken suggested that she attend a meeting of the Prudential Commission and raise the issue of this difference in cost. He added that she should also point out that the energy committee has offered the help reduce high energy costs.

Subcommittees. At the December meeting, Katherine had suggested that committee members are free to form subcommittees which could seek the help of Wallingford residents for energy related projects.

Ken expressed an interest in publishing regular energy tidbits — short, easy to understand approaches to energy issues such as a \$100 weatherizing concept from Seven Days. Katherine offered to set up a system for publicizing these issues. "Front Porch Forum is the obvious method and if something needs an illustration, we could post that on the town's Facebook page." [Two days after the meeting, Katherine announced the creation of energywallingford@gmail.com as a way of collecting tidbit suggestions. She also reported that she had created a Front Porch Forum account under that email address and that she would also explore alternative postings "anywhere else I find traction."]

Ken asked Katherine whether these tips needed to be a finished product or just an idea. Katherine responded that she was open to either.

Ken referred to a list of subcommittee ideas in the agenda and asked for volunteers.

John offered to organize a group of energy plan advisors. Ken suggested that he also work on transportation.

Doug offered to work on conservation.

Carol is interested in local food.

Ken signed up for weatherization and also on contractor outreach.

Robbie is also interested in reaching out to his fellow contractors and to furthering the conversion to LED lighting. "People don't realize that there are now LED bulbs for practically any lighting application."

Ken suggested that Ralph take on public transportation, though Ralph worries that the real problem here is low ridership.

Forest Management and Climate Change. John reminded Doug that he had asked that a new business item be added to the agenda. "That's right," Doug responded. "I had an epiphany recently when I saw a pamphlet by authors from UVM and UMass Amherst." (D'Amato A, Catanzano P. [Forest Carbon: An Essential Natural Solution for Climate Change](#). University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2019.) "The pamphlet is a really readable explanation of the ways forests take up and store atmospheric carbon dioxide, but that in order for the forests to play this role they need proper management. For example, it's important that there be trees of all ages."

Carol agreed. "Well-managed forests are key. Our woodlands are frequently in terrible shape."

Doug added that woodlands need to be conserved not just preserved. "You can't just forget about them."

Katherine pointed out that the goal is not necessarily to make the woodlands pretty.

"Yes," Carol agreed. "We need a working landscape."

Doug stressed that all forests are playing an increasingly strategic role in carbon storage and sequestration, and that it serves the interests of the energy committee to be supportive of forest conservation efforts.

Ralph suggested that it was time to adjourn. Ken asked for "one last thing. We need to draft letters praising the efforts of Wallingford Crushed Stone and of James and Thomas Hand in creating solar PV in Wallingford."

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40. The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 4 at 6:30 in Town Hall.

— Submitted by John Armstrong