

WALLINGFORD ENERGY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the November 10, 2020 Meeting

Virtual Meetings. After Ken and three other members found Jay waiting for us upstairs at Town Hall, Ken asked whether we should go virtual from now on. John reported on a conversation he had with Sandi. The town has a Zoom account and she sets up and hosts each meeting, stays on long enough to say hello and then signs off. Jay asked about a telephone rather than video link. Katherine (who had joined us by telephone) added that the Zoom account also had a telephone link. John added that making the meeting virtual eliminates any concern about conflicts with election days. "We'll just meet the first Tuesday of every month."

Call to Order. Ken called the meeting to order at 6:50. Present: John Armstrong, David Castonguay, Katherine MacLauchlan (by phone), Ralph Nimtz, Ken Welch and Jay White.

Minutes. Jay moved the adoption of the October minutes with corrections he had made in an email to John. David and Katherine seconded the motion. There was no objection.

Town Hall Energy Project. Jay reported that he had sent Sandi an email about a two phase air sealing project. Phase I refreshes the weatherstripping around the four exterior doors of the building. [The selectboard has received a bid for this phase.] Phase II will seal the ducts or chases that go from the basement up to the roof. Several of these were probably a part of a gravity heating system. The chase in the clock tower originally held the chain that ran the town clock. It now serves as a duct to run cable from the basement to the cell phone antennas in the tower. Sealing these will probably involve working from a lift near roof level and should probably be put off until spring and combined with a painting project.

Energy Plan. John asked for feedback on Revision 26 of the energy plan. Someone suggested that we ask Sandi to print up copies of this revision so that committee members could mark them up.

Solar Congratulations. Ken reiterated his desire to recognize the two large solar developers that have been active in Wallingford and also the 30 or so landowners who have installed solar panels on their property (a group that includes committee members John Armstrong, Doug Blodgett and David Castonguay.)

[John is thinking of doing this in the format of an official proclamation, that is, a series of “Whereas” paragraphs concluding with a “Now Therefore” paragraph. The whereas paragraphs would include statements about the utility of locally produced energy and Wallingford’s responsibility under the state’s Comprehensive Energy Plan to meet generation goals; the final whereas paragraph will describe each land owner or developer’s accomplishments. The now therefore paragraph would express the Committee’s appreciation for these accomplishments.]

Ken asked whether we have a list of photovoltaic projects in town. John agreed to track this down.

Committee Budget. Ken suggested that we should ask for level funding at \$500 a year. Ralph thought this would be a good idea and David, Katherine and John agreed.

Ken congratulated Ralph on his work on Stone Meadow. Ralph thanked him and added that he was proud of the project. “It’s remarkable how many people use the meadow — though 80% of the users are dog walkers.” John found this unsurprising. “For a largely rural area, it’s remarkable how few opportunities there are for satisfying dog walks in or near the village.”

There was a discussion about woodpeckers which ended with Ralph suggesting that we move along.

The Sewage Treatment Plant is a large user of electricity. Ken promised to get in touch with the person at Efficiency Vermont who consults on water and wastewater treatment to set up a visit to the treatment plant and make suggestions on how to improve the treatment process. John asked to be invited to join any site visit. Ken suggested that we should also involve.

New Business. Jay is drafting a letter to the selectboard about using zoning enforcement as a way of promoting the filing of certificates of energy efficiency for commercial and residential projects. Ralph explained that he and other architects design commercial projects to code and then rely on contractors to certify that the project was actually built to code. “Things can be a little looser on residential projects.”

John asked whether this meant that certifying compliance with, for example, setback requirements would be an opportunity to also file forms about energy codes. Jay replied that it would, and he asked for help with the draft of the letter to the selectboard. [Several days later Katherine provided a revised text that was met with wide acceptance by other committee members.]

Ken asked whether there was any other new business. John suggested dinner — to which Ralph added “Ralph’s dinner.”

Ken asked when the next meeting would be. John replied December 1. David asked to confirm that this would be virtual. Ken asked John to get the passwords and sign on procedure.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25. The 6:30 PM December 1 meeting will be available for members and interested members of the public at [insert logon information].

— Submitted by John Armstrong