

Meeting Minutes 20160309

Town of Underhill  
Energy Committee  
09 March 2016

DRAFT MINUTES

Recording Start 18:33

CALL TO ORDER

Jerry Adams, Pete Bennett, Peter Duval, Chris Miller and Tom Moore in attendance, the regular meeting was called to order at 6:36pm in the Town Hall Kitchen, with Mr. Miller in the chair and Mr. Duval recording minutes as secretary.

Agenda

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Public Comment  
Town Meeting  
Project Outlook

Public Comment

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None

Town Meeting

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Pete B. reported on the discussion of the committee's annual report. The committee's concern about biomass and its greenhouse gas emissions in the town plan drew attention. Pete B. told the town meeting about our position and the disagreement over the "CCRPC boilerplate."

Discussion of wood use in wood stoves and at schools. Pete B. said that McNeil emits 350,000 tons of CO2 and more efficient combustion would reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

Chris said that this is an active issue that the committee will revisit.

Peter D. said that Pete B. explained the committee's position well. He said that a low temperature district heating system that he had analyzed for McNeil would have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by displacing heating fuels, but a more recent medium temperature district heating system would cut into electrical production and not reduce emissions. Heat pumps would probably be better.

Discussion of low oil prices and impact on heat pumps which are now

more expensive than oil. Jerry suggested reading "Boom" about fracking and market manipulation.

6:53

#### Annual Reorganization

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Chris said that there are three positions to fill, Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. Discussion of roles and duties.

#### MOTION

Tom MOVED, and Jerry SECONDED to elect Pete B. to the position of Chair. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

#### MOTION

Peter D. MOVED, and Jerry SECONDED to elect Tom to the position of Vice Chair. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

The election of the secretary was postponed.

7:14

#### Project Outlook

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Chris described how the project outlook list would work. Ideas appear on the list to hold a place for later action. When they attract a committee sponsor, they can move forward. He presented the list and asked committee members to sponsor ideas for further action. Tom suggested that there be two sponsors for an idea. Peter suggested that we may "suffer from tyranny of the spreadsheet," and that the ideas would benefit from expanded prose that explains the ideas. Discussion ensued about "Leakage abatement outreach."

Chris proceeded to the list:

#### Harvest Market Booth

Chris said that he would have pursued it for 2015 if he had know about the Capstone weatherization trailer. He described the long lead time for arranging the booth space and other details. Peter said that this would be good material for the prose write-up, with a history of the issue, purpose, details about contacts, etc. Chris asked if there was support for the project, and there was. He will sponsor it.

Pete B. said that it would take a long time to go through the list in such detail and asked if the projects could be written up by the sponsor outside the meeting.

#### Energy Leakage Abatement

Chris said that the committee could go as far along the list as time

permitted, and there is little that is time sensitivity. He described Energy Leakage Abatement as providing items and assistance that would make homes tighter. Tom said that he wanted to start with getting funds to buy the materials. Pete B. asked if the project would be like the energy visits. Discussion ensued. Harvest Market distribution, tied to the weatherization trailer. Peter D. suggested that generating funds and acquiring materials could be capacity development in anticipation of opportunities for later outreach. Chris suggested that project could change as things progressed and that it could be combined with other outreach.

#### Public Outreach – Energy Tips

Tom said that this could be combined with Energy Leakage Abatement and ties into Energy Day and other outreach. Chris said that it could include web-based outreach and newspaper articles. Pete B. said that he was skeptical about events and that modern communication. Tom said that April was interested in outreach. Chris said that it is good to distinguish between content and presentation. Pete B. said that April had leads to get an intern to help with web development. Peter D. cautioned that a web site can consume a lot of effort. Pete B. said that he thought Front Porch Forum was not a great way to disseminate information. Jerry said that he reads Front Porch Forum religiously, and that a link to an energy tip on, say, box sill insulation. Chris said that he would leave the item open. Pete B. offered a list of questions to answer about outreach: Do residents understand that different costs for heating a home? Paybacks for various energy improvements? Rebates for improvements? Means of financing improvements? Different ways to heat hot water? There is no centralized source. He wondered about the best way to present this information, simply and clearly.

Peter D. said that he has been doing web-based outreach for a long time. There hasn't been a big change in how to do it. He said that it is still just writing hypertext, and that is what gives the online content value. Once the hypertext is developed on the blog, the compelling first two paragraphs can be posted on Front Porch Forum with a link to the blog. He offered vtdigger.org news stories as an example of effective hypertext.

Chris suggested that stumbling upon the information when need arises is how many people approach energy topics. Peter D. offered the recent email about microclimates as an example of how to get started. He followed up the recent climatology presentation with a letter to the state climatologist, and said it could form the basis of further research and content for the blog.

Peter said that the cool thing about a blog is that a post get a time stamp, and it can be later improved, or forgotten about. It is a web page and it is automatic at the same time. Pete B. summarized it as an easy web site.

Several ideas were collected together as Outreach: Leakage Abatement, Energy Tips, local scouts energy project, web development. Tom said that he would check in with scout leaders.

#### Resource Library

Chris said that he wanted to approach Deborah Rawson Memorial Library (DRML) about collecting resources together. He would like to make a small poster, with quotations to see if it generates interest. Tom suggested putting out a sandwich board to announce the unveiling of the resource library. Pete B. suggested asking DRML about the best methods. Chris will sponsor this idea.

#### Streetlighting

Tabled until Bob is available.

Chris listed other items on the list

Climate Response Policy

Assisting Town Energy Planning

Track PACE program

#### Revisit Landfill Solar

Chris mentioned an EPA siting document (see the Google group for link) Jerry reported that he had discussions with the landfill well monitoring project manager and learned that one well has vinyl chloride in it, which is product of breakdown plastics. The well has 6 parts per billion, and the EPA threshold is 2 parts per billion. Pete B. asked if this means the Landfill Solar project should be put on hold. Jerry said that it probably should. Chris wanted to continue research, questions such as, "Can solar go on leaching landfills?" Peter D. said that Vermont Electric Co-op wants more solar, just in fewer, large projects. Pete B. asked if these details could be investigated by the sponsors, Jerry and Chris(?).

#### Town Plan and Solar Siting

Pete B. said that he would explore this with Cynthia Seybolt. He wonders if the town plan should have an addendum that addresses solar siting. Jerry said that a two sentence statement that solar arrays should offend the town's aesthetic values would be good.

#### Roundabouts and Stop Signs

Peter D. said that a lot of the projects are internal, capacity building and the experience of the Albertini subdivision demonstrated the need for it. Even with vocal opposition and public scrutiny, the town came to an improper decision. Pete B. said the three-way stop was Cliff Peterson attempt at making it safer when he could find no legal reason to deny the curb cut. Peter D. said that it was Jen Desautel's responsibility to stand up at the moment he suggested it and explain that stop signs were ruled out of the design because they don't meet

the engineering standards. Tom asked why the town couldn't make a determination after the new road is constructed. Peter D. said that any traffic engineer who reviews the plan will say that the stops do not meet the "warrants" and cannot be placed on Pleasant Valley Road, but that still leaves the new intersection, which would be, dangerously, too close to the existing Mountain Road intersection. He said that modern roundabouts are ten times safer than other intersections, and in this case, with a new intersection that does not reflect good engineering practice, that difference is even greater. The committee's interest in the topic is that stop signs require vehicles to come to a complete stop. This is apparent from the noise at stop controlled intersections. Noise is bad. It indicates wasted energy. A modern roundabout is a lot more energy efficient. Just considering fuel alone, an intersection such as Taft Corners would save over 100,000 gallons of fuel per year if it were a modern roundabout. Pete B. asked how this is relevant to Underhill. Peter D. said that a mini-roundabout is appropriate for this location.

Next Meeting

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Web Development – Peter D. offered to explain how to use the blog.

Member Items, Correspondence, Announcements

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Pete B. asked if we had any money. Discussion ensued. Several items paid out-of-pocket by members were mentioned.

Peter D. asked how the town garage heat exchanger came to be. Jerry said that the selectboard decided to do the project after Wiemann Lamphere suggested it.

ADJOURNMENT

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On a MOTION by Tom, SECONDED by Pete B., the meeting was UNANIMOUSLY adjourned at 8:24pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Duval, Secretary

Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Peter Bennett, Chair