

Town of Underhill Energy Committee

Wednesday, May 11, 2016 6:30 pm

Meeting Minutes - Final

Quorum established. Underhill Energy UEC (UEC) members in attendance: Peter Bennett (PB), Peter Duval (PD), Tom Moore (TM), April Desclos (AD), Jerry Adams (JA), Bob Murphy (BM)

Meeting called to order at 6:37 pm, with AD recording minutes.

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

Public Comment Period

No public comments.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2016 minutes: unanimously approved

April 18, 2016 minutes: AD asked whether it was accurate that UEC agreed not to pursue at present an inquiry from the Jericho Energy Task Force (JETF) regarding a joint public presentation. TM said we can reach out to JETF and that joint presentations could help with funding and attendance levels. PB said we did agree not to pursue this idea at present. He receives JETF's meeting agendas and will look out for future collaboration opportunities. Minutes unanimously approved.

Recording of Meeting Minutes

AD previously agreed to record the May 11, 2016 minutes. TM agreed to record the June 8, 2016 minutes.

UEC agreed to continue rotating the task of recording minutes for now and look into whether UEC is required to elect a secretary.

Open Meeting Law

AD previously agreed to monitor compliance with the Open Meeting Law, and agreed to continue to do so. AD said we should review UEC's Rules of Procedure to ensure they comply with the Open Meeting Law.

There was general agreement that UEC is in compliance with the requirement to post agendas 48 hours before regular meetings and that meeting minutes submitted within 5 days of a meeting can be marked "draft" until they are approved in the following meeting.

UEC discussed email correspondence. Clarity is needed on what constitutes "business" under the law's definition of "meeting." A quorum can't discuss UEC "business" through email. PB said an example of UEC business might be a discussion of whether UEC should hold a talk on heat pumps. Administrative correspondence (TM provided example of inviting other members to an event that isn't organized by the UEC) can be handled through email. There was general agreement that policy discussions and final decisions shouldn't be handled through email.

UEC discussed its Google Group. PB mentioned that according to Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) guidance, use of the Google Group doesn't ensure compliance with the Open Meeting Law. PB mentioned that not everyone has access to internet and email. AD agreed that it doesn't. TM and PD said any member of the public can access the Group. UEC agreed that the group is useful for disbursement of UEC correspondence and documents.

PD suggested that "business discussion" entries to the Google Group mail could be submitted as minutes to assure compliance with open meeting requirements.

AD said members should continue to monitor email and Google Group for Open Meeting Law compliance.

Who can UEC assist?

TM suggested that Chris Miller (CM) talk to the fire department about its inquiry.

PB said UEC members can help anyone if they are acting as individuals, but he is concerned about liability when the UEC provides assistance. He said the mission statement doesn't mention businesses. He agreed to ask for Steve Webster's opinion, since he has insight as a founding UEC member. TM said he would like UEC to help anyone it can, but assistance could be provided on a case-by-case basis, and we could come up with wording to avoid liability.

MOTION

TM moved, and PB seconded, to address on a case-by-case-basis requests from businesses for assistance with energy-related issues. Motion PASSED.

Projects

1. UEC budget for projects (BM entered meeting at beginning of discussion)

PB talked to Brian Bigelow about budget. UEC doesn't need approval before spending UEC funds, and \$500 is available through the end of June. TM said we could use the funds and request more if we want to pursue other projects requiring funding.

PB requested ideas for ways to use UEC's budget. TM suggested speaker fees and library items. BM suggested the Harvest Market, and PB said CM is pursuing this project. PD suggested do-it-yourself tools such as a watt meter, infrared (IR) camera, or blower door. TM and BM said someone with experience needs to use a blower door or IR camera. PB said we can't get into providing services such as energy audits. BM mentioned that the library has two watt meters. BM said he is taking a work sabbatical soon and would like to help Underhill residents, possibly using some of these tools.

2. Solar siting

PB mentioned the recent Vermont law S230 that gives towns more say in the solar siting process. He asked whether UEC should act as consultants to the Town, but not pushing a particular policy direction. He mentioned the possibility of an addendum to the Town Plan that conforms with the Regional Plan on this issue. The Public Service Board would take the addendum into account when making siting decisions. JA said a regional plan is needed first, and he doesn't think there is one.

PB indicated he would discuss this with the Planning Commission in the near future.

3. Regular energy presentations by UEC members

PD previously suggested brief presentations on energy topics during regular UEC meetings. PB and AD said PD had agreed to send a blurb describing this idea. PB said this idea is useful for certain topics (for example, PACE funding). PD said the topics could be more philosophical. There was general agreement that at any time, anyone can suggest a topic to present, presentation lengths can vary, and presentations don't have to happen at every meeting. UEC will vote on any suggestion for a topic for presentation at the next meeting.

TM suggested that presentations take place at the beginning of the meeting, which was agreed to by members.

MOTION

TM moved, and BM seconded, to allow PD to read a short book about transportation during the June 8, 2016 meeting. Motion PASSED.

JA said he would like to present about hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") during the July 2016 meeting.

In a more general context, UEC discussed when a motion is required to indicate agreement (or not) on various items brought up by the committee. Consensus was that this was not entirely clear and should perhaps be more formally set.

4. Leakage abatement presentation

AD contacted Dave Keefe and told him the presentation would likely be in the fall. He is interested in presenting, but needs at least 20 people in attendance for it to be worthwhile. BM will send UEC an agenda for Dave Keefe's presentation in July for a credit union. TM said we should collaborate with JETF and hold the presentation at the library. BM agreed to contact JETF.

5. Local scouts

TM said this project is on hold for now until he receives more information.

6. UEC website/blog

PB and AD will continue discussing website or blog goals and content. They would like PD to help everyone understand the current blog's capabilities in more detail. AD asked whether UEC should write

and post original articles to the UEC site instead of just sharing other organizations' articles, and PD and TM said yes. PD said the current process is that UEC reviews articles before they are posted.

7. Library resources

CM is pursuing this project.

8. Landfill solar siting

This project is on hold. JA said he told a consultant that the landfill contains low levels of chlorinated compounds that are increasing annually. The perception of risk related to these pollutants is a consideration. Cost of pollution testing might outweigh financial benefit of solar project. TM said other sites should be considered for solar projects. PD heard that some solar systems might be underperforming in Underhill, and the microclimate might not be suitable for solar. PD agreed to discuss this issue with Steve Webster.

9. PACE

BM said UEC shouldn't pursue PACE. PACE has been through several reiterations and is unwieldy, and only three projects have been completed. The USDA Rural Utility Services Energy Efficiency and Conservation Loan Program could be a better option. Interest rates are low, and loans are guaranteed. BM agreed to gather more information.

UEC agreed we would put PACE investigation on hold.

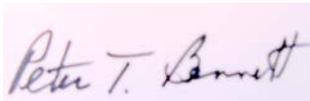
ADJOURNMENT

On motion by PB, seconded by TM, meeting was adjourned at 8:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

April Desclos, Member of Town of Underhill Energy Committee

Approved on: 6/8/2016



Peter Bennett, Chair

