

Meeting Minutes 20150317

Town of Underhill
Energy Committee
17 March 2015

~~DRAFT~~ MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Jerry Adams, Pete Bennett, Peter Duval, Tom Moore(6:44), Bob Murphy(6:42), Steve Webster(6:52), and Chris Miller in attendance, the regular meeting was called to order at 6:40pm in the Town Hall Kitchen, with Chris in the chair and Peter D. recording minutes as secretary.

(Brian Bigelow joined the meeting briefly at 8:02.)

Agenda

No adjustments

Public Comment

None

Letter to Planning Commission Regarding Town Plan

Pete B. began the discussion by asking the committee about the method for communicating our concerns to the planning commission about the content and process of the town plan. (Bob arrives)

Chris said that "we want to stay on the best of terms" and felt that we should ask ourselves exactly what we want to say about our disagreement with CCRPC to the planning commission and about the process. (Tom arrives) Chris wants to know what the planning commission feels constrained with regard to the plan. Would dialogue help get to a better understanding? He suggested meeting with the planning commission.

Pete B. asked what the plan's role is in the operation of the town. Jerry answered that it has the potential to drive the town, but that he hasn't seen it happen in practice here. Pete B. is concerned about outdoor boilers being promoted. Jerry thinks that they are regulated.

Jerry described the plan process and noted the public hearing tomorrow night. Revising the plan significantly means another round of editing with the CCRPC staff.

Pete B. asked if we were all agreed on the wood burning issue. Peter D. agreed and said that it is a factual error that permeates the regional plan. He also said that the town has more control we have been led to believe. Other town plans have completely different structures and address very abstract ideas. The greenhouse gas calculation isn't matter of a planning opinion, it is about applying the same principles to all fuels.

Peter D. asked if an addendum could be added to the plan.

Chris said that he was in favor of sending the letter because gets in the record somewhere. And a dialogue with the planning commission would help us understand how we could participate in the process so that the edits we had suggested would be included in the plan.

MOTION

Tom MOVED and Jerry SECONDED to send the letter regarding greenhouse gas emissions and wood burning as drafted. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION

Pete B. MOVED and Jerry SECONDED to request to meet with the planning commission about the process of drafting the plan. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7:00pm

Discussion of biomass and the carbon cycle. Peter D. asked if the letter should include citations and references. Pete B. said that Bill Keeton, a UVM research forester, has done good work in this area. Pete B. will circulate information.

Chris proposed that we talk about this in the future as an education item. Discussion ensued. Peter D. suggested that biomass greenhouse gas emission could be an area of specialization for our committee.

7:11pm

Organization

MOTION

Steve MOVED and Jerry SECONDED, to re-elect the existing officers: Chris, Chair; Jerry, Vice-Chair; Peter D., Secretary.

Peter D. said that although he enjoyed being secretary, he thought it was a good idea to rotate officers for the long-term benefit of the committee operations. Jerry concurred. Pete B. said that he felt that the existing slate has been working well. Alternative arrangements were discussed.

Tom called the question.

The MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7:19pm

Mission

Chris asked about the source of the existing mission statement. Jerry said that Roger Frey drafted the original statement. Peter D. said he thought it was written into the "charge" from the selectboard at some point.

Pete B. felt that the current mission is pretty good and asked about the grant seeking item.

Steve suggested adding something about switching to sustainable energy. It adds a positive.

Jerry mentioned efficient building practices.

Peter D. said that he thought of the committee as being "statutory," but could not find anything about town energy committees by keyword searching the online statutes. "Energy Coordinator" has been in the statutes since 1975. He read the description of the position. He said that Brattleboro has a big committee, and coordinator, and climate protection director.

Chris asked if we should broaden the mission statement and gave the example of emissions as something to include. Jerry said that mission statements are "corporate". Steve felt that they are useful and, if positive, will give people ideas about what they could do. He suggested language, "make recommendations for reducing non-renewable energy consumption and promoting substitution with renewable, sustainable energy sources." Tom suggested adding something regarding pollution and emissions. Chris suggested "environmental consequences."

Peter D. suggested including "prudent anticipation of future regulation" in the new version. Tom did not like the word "prudent."

Steve will draft a new mission statement and circulate it for review.

Pete B. referred to the VLCT Handbook for a discussion of the Energy Coordinator and its history. (VLCT Handbook, July 2014, Chapter 14, page 31

<http://www.vlct.org/assets/Resource/Handbooks/VLCT%20July%202014%20Town%20Officers%20Handbook%20-%20Complete.pdf>)

7:35pm

Rutland Resolution

Chris summarized: The Town of Rutland feels that it does not have input on siting renewable energy projects. Jerry said that the 44MW solar plant on the landfill was the origin of their concern.

Steve said that the Charlotte Energy Committee was concerned that selectboards would join this resolution without careful consideration. Pete B. said he felt there is a tide rising against the PSB oversight. Jerry said that over 150kW the permitting is more involved. Peter D. said that towns do have party status in the Act 248 review process. Bob read the resolution.

<http://www.rutlandtown.com/various/resolutiontowns.pdf>

http://www.charlottetvt.org/vertical/sites/%7B5618C1B5-BAB5-4588-B4CF-330F32AA3E59%7D/uploads/Rutland_Resolution_revised_2015.pdf

MOTION

Pete B. MOVED, and Chris SECONDED, to consider the resolution, whether to oppose it, revise it, support it, at the next meeting. MOTION PASSED 6-1.

Solarize

Steve said that he was disappointed by the response to his Front Porch Forum posts. Peter D. suggested describing specific savings from the project. Jerry asked which contractor was selected for Solarize Upper Valley. Steve is going to try again with more research and a new post to FPF.

Pete B. wondered how the Vital Communities grant incoming was used to promote the project.

Chris suggested that maybe smaller group (say 10), without the marketing, would be able to group buy.

Peter D. asked if the town itself could be a participant in the group buy.

Landfill Solar

Jerry reported that AllEarth and GroSolar were non-responsive, and SunCommon unenthusiastic, about the landfill. SunCommon is overbooked for projects and Vermont Electric Co-op, on whose territory the landfill lies, does not offer bonus solar tariff in contrast to Green Mountain Power. Questions about transmission capacity and interconnection remain to be explored. Peter D. described a conversation with resident who would be concerned with the effect on the view of the mountain from the trails near the landfill.

8:02pm
(Brian Bigelow joined the meeting)

Infrastructure

Brian reported that the town garage lighting project will be completed for just under \$1000 by the Town.

Minutes

MOTION

Pete B. MOVED, and Tom SECONDED, to accept the minutes of 14 January 2015 and 11 February 2015 as submitted. Passed Unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

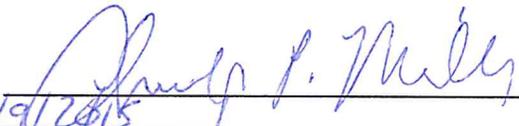
On a MOTION by Pete B., seconded by Steve, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:04pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Duval, Secretary

Approved

date:



Chris Miller, Chair