

Meeting Minutes 20141210

Town of Underhill
Energy Committee
10 December 2014

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Jerry Adams, Pete Bennett, Peter Duval, Tom Moore, Bob Murphy, Steve Webster, 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.

Agenda

Due to the snow storm, Pete B. asked to move Town Infrastructure to the top of the agenda.

Public Comment

None

Town Infrastructure

Pete B. said that the town staff is not using the town hall heat pumps because they are having trouble controlling heat pumps in tandem with the existing boiler. They feel that there is a problem with the design of the system. Bob discussed this with Sherri, too, and learned that Ramona turns on air conditioning to compensate for overheating in her office. Pete B. said that they are also concerned about freezing pipes, which they feel compels the use of the boiler. Bob feels that insulation should have fixed the pipe issue. Jerry said that he suggested moving the pipe in question at the time of the insulation project, but that the decision was made to leave it in place. Bob will spend some more time with Sherri to get sort out the problem and propose a solution.

Pete B. also asked about the post office, which has a new heat pump. He is concerned about the under-the-eave mounting of the heat pumps at the post office and town hall. Bob related his encounters with the post office staff and agreed that there is some more work to be done in setting up the systems and showing the staff how to use them.

Jerry described clamping an aquastat on a hydronic pipe that is at risk of freezing; as the temperature of the pipe drops, the boiler sends out some hot water, which keeps the system from freezing.

6:50

Solar Communities

Steve provided some more details from the Solarize Upper Valley program. There is a volume pricing RFP that provides greater discounts as the number of projects in the buying group increases. It is a 15 week process and there are standards system designs with adders for variables such as larger systems and longer interconnection runs.

Discussion turned to implementation in Underhill/Jericho, with concern noted about fairly and transparently choosing a single vendor for the project, and whether the town and even the Energy Committee should be involved at all. There was also a concern about keeping the number of committee members working on the project below quorum to avoid running afoul of the Open Meeting Law. Jerry suggested that Cliff Peterson would have good advice.

MOTION

Tom moved, and Jerry seconded, to ask the Selectboard for feedback on idea. Passed unanimously.

Peter D. asked that a “carport” option included.

Town Garage

Bob visited the site to see how the lighting project was progressing. The 255w T5 fixtures are being installed. There was a question about insulation disturbance, which has been resolved.

The heat recovery ventilator is also being installed. Jerry now thinks that it will not be adequate to remove the moisture from snow melt. Other towns clean their equipment with a firehose before garaging. Underhill only has a pressure cleaner. This practice difference may dominate the efforts of the ventilation system. Tom asked if there were alternatives for removing the snow and water. Jerry said the area around the garage is paved with gravel, which is tracked in by the trucks. The gravel falls off the trucks and makes it difficult to squeegee water off the floor.

PACE

Bob explained the renewed push for PACE financing, with new marketing materials being produced and the financing rate (1.99%) made more competitive. Pete B. said that High Meadows is interested in thermal efficiency via on-bill charges.

7:12 (Pete B. Leaves)

Peter D. noted a sweet, antifreeze odor in the building, which was confirmed by Tom and others — perhaps a leak in the boiler system.

Cold Climate Heat Pumps

Bob mentioned the \$300 upstream incentive for heat pumps. There are no conditions for the incentive, so the customer should be attentive to pricing and be sure that the incentive is accounted for in any quotes from installers. There were 300 customers on a wait list for the incentive. The incentive program will extend through 2015.

Bob will have an iPhone controllable, single-head Mitsubishi 15kBtu system installed on Tuesday. He also has a DHW heat pump. Bob is in a trial for a heat pump clothes drier. Discussion about the relative incentives for the different heat pump devices.

Tom mentioned that he is working on a three-customer community solar system.

7:27

Community Energy and Climate Action Conference

Steve attended this year's meeting and focused on community solar presentations. Peter asked about the keynote speaker, James Kunstler, who came to prominence in energy and planning with his book "The Geography of Nowhere." Underhill will become a "slum" in his analysis as central cities become increasingly desirable for their services. Steve said the speech was good, but as he accumulates all of his observations about the world, it's "really a downer."

Steve reported that the attendance was lower this year, but the presentations were helpful.

7:30

Home Energy Audits

Jerry would like to do some more home audits. He has an active contact. Bob has a list of previous contacts. Peter D. asked if there is a video of an actual home energy audit, which could be used for marketing. Bob said the Capstone has a Button Up video, which is at the library.

Steve said that the financing issue has been broadly resolved, so there's no reason not to get going on the audits. Chris said that we need to follow through on all of the audit requests to maintain credibility as an energy committee.

Other Items

Bob requested help with improving the post office basement door. Discussion of a good design ensued. Tom recommended 5/8" CDX to sandwich the 3" foam.

Better Buildings By Design is scheduled for 4 & 5 February, 2014. Energy Committee members can get a discounted admission.

Steve's 120kW net metering system is going ahead. Discussion about trends in energy. Bob mentioned that Sunpower is launching a new plant in Mexico.

Peter D. showed his Efficiency Vermont Home Energy Report, which “rivals the CCRPC in energy information obfuscation.” Bob said that 100,000 randomly selected customers have received the reports. There have been many complaints received by customer service at Efficiency Vermont.

Minutes

MOTION

Bob moved, and Jerry seconded, to accept the minutes of 12 November 2014 as submitted. Passed Unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by Steve, seconded by Bob, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:48.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Duval, Secretary

Approved _____ date: _____

Chris Miller, Chair