

TOWN OF UNDERHILL
Energy Committee Minutes Final
6:30 P.M. Wednesday, September 12, 2018

Meeting called to order 6:30 p.m.

Quorum established Underhill Energy Committee (UEC) members in attendance: Peter Bennett (PB), Jerry Adams (JA), Nicole Bourassa (NB), Michael Oman (MO), Steve Webster (SW), Ruth Julianelle (RJ), and Dwight DeCoster (DD)

Meeting Agenda adjusted to allow for discussion of Powerwall if time

Public Comments – none

Reviewed/Approval of Minutes from August 8, 2018

SW asked that they include a brief description of VEC program to shift electric demand by electric hot water heaters. Agreed to.

Move to accept modified minutes by DD; approved unanimously.

Current status of Gravel Pit solar

PB reported that a comparison of two proposals for a 150 kW solar array on the Beartown gravel pit had been presented to Select Board (SB) and that the SB was now having the legal documents reviewed.

The UEC then spent an hour discussing if it was appropriate at this point – two developers' proposals having been made public – to allow unsolicited proposals from other developers, in this case Peck Electric. The broad consensus was that from a simple fairness point-of-view – one might say ethical – it was not.

The committee did an in-depth review of how this might be possible but could see no way that was fair to the two developers who for a year had responsibly worked with us to reach the goal. Upon the conclusion of the discussion, the following motion was made by PB:

For SW to inform the SB Chair that after extensive discussion, the UEC unanimously agreed that the invitation to allow Peck to submit a late proposal for the gravel pit solar installation was inappropriate. This has resulted in an unethical situation with respect to the previous two developers, whose proposals have been made public, and we do not readily see a mean by which this can be remedied.

The motion was passed unanimously.

Reviewed wording of Front Porch Forum (FPF) post to have UEC support the VEC Electric Hot Water Heater Program

After some review and editing, a motion was made to accept the following wording and for PB to post this on FPF:

Want to help reduce VEC peak energy demands?

The Underhill Energy Committee agreed to publicize the program described below for the Vermont Electric Co-Op (VEC).

The objective of this program is to reduce the peak demand for electricity by shifting some electricity consumption from times of peak demand to times of lower demand. Specifically, this program will shift the time one's electric hot water heater consumes electricity to a non-peak demand period. Because the most polluting and most expensive electric generating plants are turned on during periods of peak demand, by reducing the peak demand this program will help the co-op bring down system costs and use more renewable energy. As VEC points out, one should still have plenty of hot water, however, and one can override the device that controls the water heater if there is a pressing need for extra hot water.

While we feel this program is something that Underhill VEC customers should know about and may want to take part in, we have not extensively researched this technology and do not feel we can guarantee its effectiveness. Nevertheless, we view this as a very intriguing pilot project and hope that it will prove successful at helping to reduce peak demands for electricity.

For questions about this program, send inquiries to support@vermontelectric.coop

The following is from VEC:

Our electric company, Vermont Electric Co-op, is seeking members here in Underhill to partake in a cutting-edge energy management technology that's designed to make the electric grid cleaner, cheaper, and easier to run. They are teaming up with a Vermont start-up company called Packetized Energy to run this program. VEC is offering participants bill credits and chances to win \$500 cash.

Here's how it works: if you have an electric resistance water heater (not a heat pump) and have continuous WiFi at your house, you're a likely candidate to participate. If you're eligible, a technician would install on your electric resistance water heater a small device that would let the heater know when electricity is plentiful and when it's scarce, thereby optimizing when the heater pulls electricity from the grid. The technology doesn't change the supply or availability of hot water to your house and you can override the device at any time, if necessary, through a digital app. Individual customer data will be protected.

You can learn more about the specifics, including the bill credits and the chance to win cash, at.

<https://www.vermontelectric.coop/programs-services/vec-packetized-energy>

The motion was passed unanimously.

Discussion of Button Up Program

DD reported that we were ready to sign an MOU with Efficiency VT for one of two Button Up programs – Button Up Champ or Button Up Hero.

After explaining the difference (Hero more extensive and most likely more rewarding to home owners), MO made motion for UEC to sign up for Button Up Hero program; passed unanimously.

Other Topics

Committee agreed that given feedback from the PACE administrator that program was too complicated and restrictive to warrant pursuing in Underhill. Rather, we would review other loan opportunities for residents.

DD reported that he had contacted the VSECU credit union with idea of giving the committee a presentation of their loan programs. They indicated that they would like to give such a presentation in one of the energy forums the UEC arranges later in the fall.

MO reported that there would most likely be transportation energy issues that the UEC might become involved with. He would report on this in a future UEC meeting.

SW stated that he would review whether a separate UEC web site was a better way to provide energy info to the Underhill public than on the Underhill town site.

Committee Operations

Next regularly scheduled meeting – October 10, 2018

On motion by JA, Energy Committee Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm .

Submitted by Peter Bennett