

Meeting Minutes 20140611  
Town of Underhill  
Energy Committee  
11 June 2014

## DRAFT MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER

Bob Murphy, Tom Moore, Jerry Adams, Peter Duval, Pete Bennett and Chris Miller in attendance, the regular meeting called to order at 6:38pm in the Town Hall Kitchen, with Chris in the chair and Peter D. recording minutes as secretary.

### Minutes

\*\*\*\*\*

### MOTION

Tom moved, Jerry seconded to accept the minutes of 14 May 2014 as submitted. Passed unanimously.

### Town Plan

\*\*\*\*\*

Chris said that he has been asked to present the Energy Committees draft of Chapter 8 -- Energy to the Planning Commission (PC) next week, and he would like to consider feedback on the chapter before the presentation.

Jerry reported that the PC discussed one aspect of the Chapter 8, the "gold standard" for new construction. The PC probably won't accept a draft that contains it. The following day, he emailed the Committee Draft to the PC Administrator for forwarding to the rest of the PC. He suggested looking at the bronze and silver standard.

Chris asked Jerry to clarify what he meant by gold, silver and bronze. Bob described some standards, in increasing rigor:

- \* State standard, Residential Building Energy Standard, RBES
- \* Energy Star, which was broken into three named standards:
  - 1) Code Plus
  - 2) Energy Star
  - 3) High Performance

Chris read the building code objective from the Committee Draft: "The town should require a High Performance Home certification as a requirement for a certificate of occupancy for new buildings."

Jerry said the town plan "goes in a drawer, until there's a problem." Later, someone could sue the town based on a claim that the plan is exclusionary.

Chris pointed out that the Committee had removed 'shall' from most of the document, and asked Jerry if 'promote' would be more acceptable.

Pete B. asked why the town should require new construction to meet a higher building performance standard.

Peter D. said that buildings have a long life, much longer than the life the person who decides to build them.

Bob said that he wished the town would enforce the existing code. Discussion ensued about the details of enforcement. The state requires that the code compliance documents be filed with the town clerk. Using the "owner/builder" form absolves the builder from complying with the state standard.

Pete B. asked if there was a revision that we could consider. Chris asked for a straw poll on modifying the code objective. Peter D. said that the PC could change the chapter on its own, and that it is the Energy Committee's role to forward its best work. Tom said that the Energy Committee would do a better job revising the chapter than the PC.

Chris asked for a motion.

Tom suggested offering an incentive for high performance buildings, with suitably "fluffy" wording to make it a recommendation to the town.

Jerry said that there will be at least one area of the plan that will not be fluffy: the town will not takeover any private roads.

Peter D. suggested writing a letter about the state standard enforcement issue, and focussing on the higher performance standard in the plan.

Pete B. asked if there are other mandates, or codes to consider. Jerry asked about the STRETCH code.

Discussion of enforcing the state standard.

Pete B. proposed wording for objective. Discussion ensued.

#### MOTION

Pete B. moved, Tom seconded to replace the objective with a "strategy": "The town should enforce current state energy codes as a requirement for the issuance of a certificate of occupancy. At the same time, the town should promote residential building practices which exceed these current state requirements." Passed 4-1, 1 absent.

Discussion was directed to the section on emissions standards.

Tom moved, Jerry seconded to strike (line 84) ", in consultation with the Conservation Commission," Passed unanimously.

Jerry asked if the references to the survey had been removed. Peter D. confirmed that they were removed at the last meeting.

Pete B. asked about the process. Chris encouraged all members to attend the PC meeting.

Peter D. suggested inserting a recommendation for a dark sky policies. Discussion ensued about the wording of the recommendation.

#### MOTION

Jerry moved, and Bob seconded to insert (at approximately line 192) a strategy "The town shall promote the minimization of night lighting, commensurate with safety and utility, in both public and private properties." Passed unanimously.

#### VHEC Grant

\*\*\*\*\*

Bob previously circulated the grant application by email. Most of the projects can be accomplished under the grant funding limit. He reported on quotes for the various projects: \$5700 for the garage lights (Green Mountain). LEDs would cost about \$3000 more. Jerry reported that the garage project could be delayed. No contractor interest has been shown so far in the roof project. Bob said that a delay was alluded to in the grant document, so it should not be a problem.

The post office audit was the basis for the project and requoted the project. The net, considering incentives, was \$4404. Pete B. asked if there was a benefit to the town for this project. Bob noted that the postal service had to make an extraordinary requisition this season for heating oil. Tom said that the improvements do not cost the town any money and become part of the town-owned building, regardless of whether the post office remains.

Bob noted concern about the low temperature operation of the heat pump. Different models function at different low temps. Bob consulted with Vermont Energy Contracting in addition to Roland Maheux. It was agreed that the model selection will be confirmed before the project is undertaken.

In reviewing the heat pumps, it was determined that the new air-conditioning system at the town hall is actually a heat pump, with a lower operating limit of 5 degrees Fahrenheit. Bob plans to recommend that the Selectboard raise the outdoor packages above the snow, so that they can be used for shoulder season heating (a \$500 project, beyond the scope of the VHEC grant).

Town hall main room lighting will cost \$1000 for equipment. The Energy Committee will take care of the labor.

The exterior light at the post office is also included as equipment only.

It was agreed to go forward with discussing the projects with the selectboard, in anticipation of receiving the grant.

#### Solar/VHEC Challenge

\*\*\*\*\*

Bob said that we will be receiving a project-by-project report from the Renewable Energy Resource Center for the past two years. SunCommon has said that in the past two years it has completed 29 projects in Underhill. The goal was 40 renewable systems. It appears that the goal was met. Pete B. will check with Sunward, which did solar hot water.

#### Heat Pump Vendors

\*\*\*\*\*

Bob noted that SunCommon is interested in giving a presentation on heat pumps. Pete B. asked about a "neutral" presentation by Efficiency Vermont and whether the state incentives are forthcoming. The incentives were just recently enacted in law, and it will take about a year for implementation. There is a contact at Efficiency Vermont who Bob can invite.

Pete B. reported that the Co-op will have a leasing program. Heat pumps are of high interest to the public. Bob described a system that he is planning to install at his house.

Discussion turned to system-wide effects of large scale adoption of air-source heat pumps and electric cars.

This agenda item will be carried over to the next meeting.

On a MOTION from Pete B. and second by Tom, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:19.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Duval, Secretary