

Energy Committee Minutes
July 16, 2020

Members Present: Vance Bell, Bill Dunkel, Tom Johnson, Michael Simonds

Called to order at 4:38PM via Zoom

The minutes of our last meeting on Feb.13 were unanimously adopted. (Moved by Vance, seconded by Michael).

Bill updated everyone on Window Dressers cancelling their community builds for 2020-2021. We discussed the possibility of endorsing Tyz-All interior windows as a substitute and perhaps using money at the Energy Committee's disposal to distribute Tyz-All kits to residents with low and/or moderate incomes. Michael suggested that we check to see if W.W. Building Supply in Newfane carries this product. Tom suggested that perhaps the Town Office could be a demonstration site for Tyz-All windows. Bill will check W&W to see if we can get a sample kit.

Bill updated everyone of the status of the Button Up VT program and incentives for weatherization being offered to homeowners by Efficiency Vermont. Button Up is offering virtual home energy visits by approved contractors, online DIY trainings, educational webinars and possible financial assistance for low income Vermonters through a new Button Up Vt Fund they are working to create. In order for residents to be eligible for these services, it is necessary for the town energy committee to register with Button Up VT. Michael moved that our committee register as a participating community in the Button Up VT 2020 program. Tom seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Michael and Bill updated the committee on the status of a possible community solar project on Michael's property. The site probably would be a bit less than an acre in size (perhaps $\frac{2}{3}$ of an acre or a little more). Michael would like to landscape it so that it includes a wildlife corridor, bird nesting areas and plants which attract pollinators. Michael and Bill recently attended a conference call with

Kim Friedman and Mel Martin, of West River 100% Renewable, and Ralph Meima, of Green Lantern Solar. WR 100% is eager to help promote a community solar project in Windham. Ralph indicated that Green Lantern would be interested in constructing and managing a community solar project here, but his company is not interested in providing the capital (between \$400K and \$600K) to build it. In the course of the conversation it became clear that there are a number of obstacles to making medium sized community solar projects (roughly 100 KW to 150 KW) profitable. Ralph suggested that it might be fruitful to explore whether a different non-profit business model could be created to advance community solar projects throughout the state. This model might create a cooperative, along the lines of SEVCA or The Nature Conservancy, that would own and operate one or more community solar arrays. Michael and Bill will participate in a WR 100% Renewable Core Team meeting on July 21 during which there will be a discussion about how to proceed. If WR 100% Renewable is interested in trying to develop an alternative non-profit business model, the Windham Energy Committee may wish to join their effort. We will discuss this at our next meeting.

The committee commended Tom and Michael for their respective, well written articles which appeared in the previous two editions of the *Windham News & Notes*. We agreed that for the next edition, in about two months, we will submit an article about Efficiency Vermont's weatherization incentives, the Button Up 2020 program and any information we may have about Tyz-All interior windows. In the meantime, Vance will put some information about Efficiency Vermont's incentives on the town web page.

The next meeting of the Energy Committee will be on Thursday, August 20, at 4:30PM, most likely via Zoom.

The meeting adjourned at 5:46PM.