Energy Committee Minutes

January 18, 2018

Present: Buddy Behrendt, Vance Bell, Dawn Bower, Bill Dunkel, Tom Johnson, Michael Simonds, Cathy Stover

Meeting was opened at 4:38PM.

Minutes of the Nov. 30th meeting were adopted unanimously.

Bill and Vance reported that we have received no public feedback to date on the possibility of a solar array near the cemetery. We have requested guidance from the Select Board at their meeting next Monday as to how they wish to proceed.

Vance suggested that if the S.B. wants us to make a presentation at Town Meeting we should give a brief (5-10 minute) overview of the proposed project and invite the public to attend a more extensive presentation and discussion at a later date. Everyone liked this idea.

We reviewed the process the WRC is following to write a regional energy plan. We reviewed the feedback the WRC has received about their draft plan at four public meetings and in 17 written comments that have been submitted. Due to a number of comments which urged the WRC to adopt a more flexible position regarding industrial wind development, the draft energy plan has been slightly modified to “restrict” rather than “preclude” utility wind generation in Resource Lands and Productive Rural Lands. The WRC is attempting to fashion a regional energy plan which will allow towns that oppose industrial wind and towns which favor it to both comply with the regional plan and have an opportunity to qualify for substantial deference at future PUC hearings.

Michael expressed skepticism that Windham can meet its 2050 energy generation targets using only four acres of land for solar panels. He plans to do some calculations about his personal energy usage, make some extrapolations regarding town usage and see if the WRC’s four acre estimate makes sense.

The committee reviewed the guidelines that the WRC has sent to the next six pilot towns which will receive help in framing their town energy plans. The first group kickoff meeting will be held next Monday, 1/22, at the WRC office in Brattleboro. Vance has volunteered to attend in Bill’s stead since Bill will be out of town next week.

We have received no comments to date about the proposed changes in the zoning regulations. A public hearing is planned for February 7.

The next meeting of the energy committee will be at 4:30 PM on Thursday, Feb. 15. At that meeting we will decide how to proceed based upon the wishes of the Select Board and the outcome of the group meeting of WRC pilot towns.

The meeting adjourned at 5:38PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Dunkel