Energy Committee Minutes

5/16/17

In Attendance: Vance Bell, Tom Johnson, Michael Simonds, Cathy Stover, Bill Dunkel

Meeting called to order 4:35 PM

Michael moved to adopt the minutes of the Jan. 17, 2019 meeting; second by Vance; unanimously adopted.

Bill updated everyone on the recent changes in the zoning regulations that the Planning Commission has been working on, especially regarding the protection of high elevation lands in the Forest Districts via the creation of a High Elevation Resource Protection Overlay District. (See Sec. 201.7 0f the zoning regulations).

Bill asked the committee for their thoughts about the following three proposed changes to the Enhanced Energy Plan which the Planning Commission will be considering at its next meeting. The words in red are the proposed new language.

A) Policy 3.1, Action Step # 4. Eliminate references to ridgelines and instead say:

*“Lands 2000 feet in elevation or higher in Forest Districts shall be left in their natural condition, free from all development, including roads, building structures, utilities, wireless broadcast telecommunications facilities, and industrial wind turbines (except camps as provided for in Chapter IX of the Town Plan and subject to the conditions articulated in Sec. 201.7 of Windham’s zoning regulations.)*

Policy 4.7 Bullet point #2 Change this to read “Fragile natural areas including *lands 2000 feet in elevation or higher in Forest Districts”*

Policy 4.12 Eliminate references to ridgelines and instead say:

*“Lands 2000 feet in elevation or higher in Forest Districts shall be left in their natural condition, free from all development, including roads, building structures, utilities, wireless broadcast telecommunications facilities, and industrial wind turbines (except camps as provided for in Chapter IX of the Town Plan and subject to the conditions articulated in Sec. 201.7 of Windham’s zoning regulations.)*

*The town prohibits any commercial or industrial operations on land above 2000 feet in Forest Districts other than forestry and will not support any commercial or industrial activity that exceeds the capacity of its public infrastructure, including emergency response assets.”*

The committee discussed whether there should be an exception made for cell towers since greater internet connectivity is a high priority for the state. We decided that cell tower construction would be disruptive in fragile high elevation

ecosystems because maintenance roads would have to be build and structures might need to be erected. Ultimately we decided to keep the prohibition against broadcast communications facilities.

We discussed whether the last sentence of Policy 4.12 was necessary. Tom suggested that it is needed because if commercial and industrial activity were allowed above 2000 feet, fire and rescue personnel might not be able to respond effectively in the event of a fire or other emergency. The committee decided to keep the last sentence in place and unanimously endorsed all three policy statements as written above.

Bill gave a brief report on the Upper Valley Energy Committee Roundtable which he attended recently in West Lebanon, NH. The committee reviewed a survey that the Sharon town energy committee had done and briefly considered whether our energy committee might want to apply for a grant to conduct a similar survey.

We also reviewed six suggestions that were made last August at our energy fair as we look ahead to the work our committee may want to do after the enhanced energy plan is completed. The future focus of the energy committee will be a main topic of discussion at our next meeting which is scheduled for Thursday, June 20, at 4:30 PM.

Michael moved to adjourn; Tom seconded. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Dunkel