Energy Committee Minutes

August 15, 2019

Committee Members Present: Vance Bell, Dawn Bower, Bill Dunkel, Tom Johnson, Michael Simonds, Cathy Stover

Members of the Public Present: Jim McCandless

The meeting was called to order at 4:32PM.

The minutes of the June 20, 2019 Energy Committee were unanimously approved.

Committee members reported on follow-up work they had done regarding a number of suggestions that were made at last year’s energy fair and at subsequent Energy Committee meetings. Tom researched the Go! Vermont website which, among other things, has resources that help facilitate carpooling and vanpooling, help people locate public transportation, and connect volunteer drivers to veterans who need transportation to V.A. hospitals. Tom noted that the Vermont Transportation Agency is offering $500 grants to municipal energy committees to help expand the outreach of the Go! Vermont program. The committee discussed the possibility of applying for a grant to fund a survey to determine what Windham residents need to help them reduce the cost and carbon footprint of transportation.

Vance has a list of homeowners in Timber Ridge who could be surveyed to see if they are interested in forming a fuel purchasing cooperative in order to negotiate a premium price for fuel oil and/or propane, and reduce the number of fuel deliveries, which consumes a lot of gasoline. Michael mentioned that the Neighborhood Savings Group, which may provide a model of how such a coop could work, deals only with Suburban Propane, Inc. The Neighborhood Savings Group already has completed its contract with Suburban Propane for the 2019-2020 winter.

Bill reported on his conversation with Will Reed at Vermont Foam regarding the possibility of creating a weatherization coop of sorts to secure better prices for insulation work. Will said that VT Foam would be interested in such an arrangement if a number of homes close to one another needed similar work done. For example, if several homes needed rim joists insulated, they might be able to negotiate a savings of several hundred dollars per job. Basic attic insulation is another kind of job that could lead to significant discounts if the homes are proximate to one another. The committee discussed perhaps creating a simple brochure which would be distributed to homeowners, or conducting neighborhood surveys to determine the level of interest in forming a purchasing cooperative.

Michael reported on his discussion with a representative from Efficiency Vermont about incentives that are available for builders or homeowners who construct energy efficient buildings. He noted that Net Zero building standards are becoming more common in Vermont. The committee discussed briefly whether the town could guarantee a homeowner that his/her taxes would not be increased for a certain period of time if Net Zero standards were met or other energy efficiency measures were incorporated into new construction or remodeling work. Michael plans to run this idea past Windham’s Listers and also see what other local energy committees may be doing to incentivize green building methods.

Tom showed the committee an Energy Information Resources spreadsheet he has created which summarizes the services and rebates offered by a number of organizations, including Efficiency Vermont, Green Mountain Power, SEVCA, Neighborworks of Western Vermont, Go! Vermont and Renewable Energy Vermont. The committee discussed how this spreadsheet might be expanded and made widely available to Windham residents. Ideas included putting copies of the spreadsheet in the town office and library, and publishing it in the *News & Notes*.

The committee approved the idea of having a fall energy fair on either Wednesday, Nov. 6, or Thursday, Nov. 14, during which several people in town who have had weatherization work done would give brief reports on the cost and benefits of their projects. Bill shared a list of Vermont Foam customers in Windham provided by Will Reed. Bill noted that Heath Boyer and Lynn Behrent have expressed their willingness to do speak Tom and Michael also volunteered to give testimonials. Cathy will ask Ralph Wyman; Michael will ask Pete Newton, and Bill will check with Russ Cumming and Leigh Merinoff. Tom suggested that the August and October issues of the *News & Notes* could each print a testimonial as a prelude to the November energy fair.

The next meeting of the Energy Committee will occur on Thursday, September 19, at 4:30PM in the Town Office.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:36PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Dunkel