Energy Committee Minutes 8/19/21

Members present: Vance Bell, Dawn Bower, Bill Dunkel, Tom Johnson, Michael Simonds.

Guests present: Ned O’Rourke and Jeff Young from the Wardsboro energy committee.

Meeting began at 4:36PM.

The main part of the meeting was a group discussion about the following questions related to our collective participation in the Window Dressers program.

1. How will measuring teams deal with the Delta variant? Will you ask if people are vaccinated? Will we go into the homes of unvaccinated customers? Should we insist customers wear a mask?

Everyone expressed concern about the proliferation of the Delta variant and the risk of home visits. Consensus emerged that we should ask the Window Dressers leadership if they have additional advice or guidance to offer measuring teams. We agreed with Ned’s suggestion to continue preparing for home visits while we wait for WD guidance and see whether the current surge begins to subside in coming weeks. We agreed that measuring teams will not begin home visits before Labor Day at the earliest.

1. Are you confident about measuring windows with crank handles, shades, etc.?

Bill suggested that it may be tricky to measure some windows and that home visits may be quite time consuming. Everyone agreed that it will be necessary for measuring teams to practice measuring different kinds of windows in advance of actual home visits.

1. Are you prepared to make at least one, maybe more calls before each visit?

Everyone agreed that at least one, perhaps two phone calls to prospective customers will be necessary prior to a home visit. Ned emphasized the importance of getting a commitment to order windows and participate in the community build over the phone. He volunteered to draft a script that can be followed when making calls to prospective customers. Bill suggested that each member of the Windham energy committee choose two people from our list of prospective customers to call. We chose Labor Day (Sept. 6) as our target date for completing these phone calls.

1. When do you plan to begin measuring visits?

Not until after Labor Day and after we have a chance to evaluate the guidance we receive from the Window Dressers leadership team.

1. Does your town have a publicity plan? Share ideas.

Wardsboro has posted notices in several newspapers, particularly in the *Brattleboro Reformer*, and they have posted fliers at a number of public locations. They plan to have a table at the Gilfeather Turnip Festival on Oct. 23. Tom suggested that the Windham EC have a table at next Sunday’s Ice cream Social and at the Labor Day tag sale at the Meeting House. Bill will talk with Beth Mcdonald about perhaps having fliers available at the opening of school breakfast. Vance will print fliers which also can be posted at the Firehouse and Town Office. Dawn will find out the deadline for the next issue of the *Windham News& Notes.* Bill feels that Windham needs a point person to develop a plan for reaching out to people once the weather turns cooler.

1. Do the three towns need to coordinate publicity to avoid duplication of effort? Does the poster about the community build have just one contact person? Is that okay?

The Window Dressers poster lists the phone number of Ned’s office. Our energy committees can sort through any responses Ned receives and decide which committee is best suited to contact prospective customers.

1. How will the three towns coordinate volunteers for the build? Should one person, or more, enter volunteer names on Signup.com?

Jeff explained that volunteers can use the Window Dressers website to sign up for a shift that works for them. Simply go to the WD website, click on “Community Build” and find the tab for our event (Nov. 17-21) and enter your name for a specific shift. Ned suggested that when we contact prospective customers by phone prior to the home visit there should be a discussion about participation in the community build. During that phone call volunteers could select a date and time to participate in the build.

1. Does each town have a volunteer coordinator for the community build?

Jeff is Wardsboro’s volunteer coordinator. Windham does not have one yet and no one knows about Londonderry.

1. Have you seen the list of equipment WD does not provide for the build? Who will be responsible for securing this stuff?

The list of items and equipment we need to provide was in an email Jessica Williams sent, I think in mid July. This is a pretty long list and the three energy committees will have to collaborate to provide these items without duplication or something falling through the cracks. It would help if someone would volunteer to oversee this task.

1. Jessica says customer lists must be cleaned by 8/25. (8/11 email). Who will do this?

We think this applies to scrubbing orders that were placed last year and never acted upon. None of our committees were involved last year, so we agreed to not worry about this deadline. Ned’s recollection is that the end of October is the deadline for adding new customers for our build. We probably should confirm this with Jessica if we move ahead with community build.

Michael updated the group on the status of the community solar project on his property. He sent Jonathan Nelson photos of the prospective site, which he had requested. Bill sent Carter a copy of the letter from the Windham Select Board and Planning Commission designating Michael’s land as a preferred site for an array.

Ned noted that after all the paperwork is submitted for a Certificate of Public Good there is a mandatory 45 day waiting period during which the public can offer comments. Michael spoke with Jonathan who said the best case scenario is that construction will begin in October or early November. If that doesn’t occur, we will have to wait until spring to break ground. The application for the Wardsboro array is following the same schedule.

The Wardsboro energy committee will meet on Aug. 31 at 6:30PM. Ned will send a link to the meeting, but the Wardsboro EC website also contains this link.

The Windham EC is not scheduled to meet until Thursday, Sept. 16 at 4:30. We have reserved Thursday 9/9 as a tentative date for an emergency meeting to discuss the Covid guidelines we receive for measuring team visits.

Following the departure of Ned and Jeff, the minutes from our July meeting were unanimously adopted. (Motion by Michael, seconded by Vance.)

Respectfully submitted, Bill Dunkel