

Town of Essex
Energy Committee
Minutes (FINAL)
Wednesday, February 10, 2021
7 PM

Present: Will Dodge (chair), Phil March, Natalee Braun, David Skopin, Irene Wrenner, Tom Yandow

I. ADMINISTRATIVE.

Minutes of November 13, 2020 were approved following minor edits.

Members discussed status of discussions on new membership, specifically Mike Gordon (on periphery for now) and Lorraine Zaloom (potential post-merger interest).

II. SUBSTANTIVE.

A. Reprioritizing Greater Essex Energy Plan: Will updated the Committee on the status of trying to get on the joint Trustees/SB agenda post-merger, and the fact that this had not been scheduled. Irene W. discussed some important considerations of the merger (esp. increased taxation), but also the fact that energy goals and other priorities were not addressed in any of the merger discussions.

It was agreed that it would make sense to write a letter to the Trustees / SB on the missed opportunities as a result of the merger. David Skopin volunteered to provide some bullet points regarding the consequences of inaction for climate change by failing to pay more attention to the Energy Plan as a municipal priority.

Will also noted that a clean copy of the Energy Plan is now on the Village and Town websites, including the Energy Committee's website.

The Committee discussed an invitation to visit with the Economic Development Committee for potentially working together on priorities across various committees.

Irene Wrenner discussed the fact that the recently-approved budget included more funds for energy retrofitting, and Tom Yandow noted the efficiency budget had been reduced but still maintained. Tom also reported that several energy-related projects (LEDs, solar trackers) are on hold through the merger vote.

Tom also pointed out that the Parks and Recreation Garage is currently a priority because the heating costs are exorbitant. Maple Street Park building is another priority, subject to seeing what happens with merger.

B. Municipal Energy Data. Will reported on ongoing efforts with GMP and Green Lantern to amalgamate information to evaluate net metering possibilities as well as data tracking, as well as upcoming conversation with Woodstock regarding Village / Town account information for net metering purposes.

C. Drive VT Incentives Discussion. Phil March reported on the FPF posting for the nine neighborhoods and on the EEC website regarding Drive VT incentives. A general discussion regarding incentives for workplace charging also took place, with Tom noting that several of the chargers had not been used at 81 Main Street or at the Village Fire Department.

D. VT Climate Council Subcommittee Work. Will discussed whether / if he and/or Phil should seek membership on one or more of the committees for the Global Warming Solutions Act entity. General consensus was to continue investigation / inquiry if helpful to ongoing municipal efforts.

E. Tree Planting: Natalee discussed developments with the 350VT tree planting

effort, including trying to get more information for churches, non-profit organizations, homeowners association, the trails committee, and other organizations to improve soil health and offset GHGs.

Next Meeting: March 10, 2021 at 7 pm.