

Town of Essex
Energy Committee
Minutes
Wednesday, March 10, 2021
7 PM

Present: Will Dodge (chair), Phil March, Natalee Braun, David Skopin, Irene Wrenner, Tom Yandow; Guests: Botur Kosimi (Essex Economic Development Committee)

I. ADMINISTRATIVE.

Minutes of February 10, 2021 were approved following minor edits.

Members discussed status of discussions on new membership, with no change, although Dottie Bergendahl is planning to apply, pending merger.

II. SUBSTANTIVE.

A. Phil March Weatherization Guide PPTX: Phil March made a comprehensive presentation of the research he has done concerning the overall successes and shortcomings of efforts at weatherization to date through Button Up. [Now posted to the Essex Energy Committee website.] The punchline: we are not seeing that weatherization efforts are “substantially improving” the overall scope. Every year, the DPS creates a list of “comprehensively weatherized homes,” but that list is questionable because houses are falling through the cracks in terms of what is done. Phil also provided several recommendations, including what “comprehensive” means. Another major conclusion is that 3E and Capstone are doing the best job in terms of weatherization of any of the efficiency agencies. A Q&A and action items discussion followed.

Action Items: (1) Contact the VT Senate and House Representatives with Phil’s presentation, which is all the more important in light of upcoming federal funds; (2) Determine how best to ally with 3E and Capstone for Essex; (3) Reconsider Button

Up for 2021, in light of very poor overall follow-through from the 2018 campaign; (4) Figuring out the largest VT Gas users in Essex and creating incentives to reduce GhG.

B. Essex Economic Development Committee Walk/Bike Efforts. Botur Kosimi discussed the general work of the EDC to improve economic / business conditions in Essex, and relayed (with Will and Irene) the discussion at the EDC regarding bike / walk initiatives and getting some cross-pollination with other committees.

Action Item: Bike/Walk Committee is the focal point, but EEC will contribute to efforts to promote keeping the Trustees / SB’s eye on the ball.

C. Municipal Energy Data. Will discussed status of efforts for linking which accounts are tied to agreements with Green Lantern, and fact that the Village / Town distinction on GMP accounts may be helping with the Committee’s mission. Will also referenced that some other municipalities are grappling with this.

Action Item: Will to get together with Tom to continue with trying to hone the data.

D. Essex Merger and Effect on EEC Activities. There was some discussion on the pros / cons of merger in general (not the currently-pending plan). Irene noted that with leadership change, there should likely be a refocus on other items, making it easier to get the Trustees and Selectboard to focus on the plan implementation.

Action Item: Find appropriate timing for re-engaging with the Trustees and Selectboard after merger vote.

E. VT Climate Council Subcommittee Work.

Will explained that in light of the very heavy volunteer requirement for subcommittee participation, no member of the Essex Energy Committee volunteered.

Action Item: Think about how to get Phil's information / presentation to the Committee, or whether we make a presentation to one of the subcommittees (i.e., find out which subcommittee would be in the best position to receive).

F. Tree Planting. Natalee discussed the fact that there will be a fall planting order in July. The spring order has been submitted.

Next Meeting: April 10, 2021 at 7 pm
[subsequently moved to April 21, 2021 at 7 pm].