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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

Meeting Minutes

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Energy Committee

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, July 2, 2024 - 6:00PM at Cole Hall

1. Members Present:

The meeting came to order at 6:03 p.m. Present were Andrea Bacchi (chair), Bill Christian, Dave Beach, and Wayne Goodman (via Zoom).

2. Conflict of Interest Statement (2 minutes)

No one reported a conflict of interest with any item on the agenda.

3. Introduction of committee members (8 minutes total, 2 minutes each)

a. Wayne Goodman said he has been chair of the BCRC energy committee for about seven years. He currently works for the US Marine Corps as an energy project manager.

b. David Beach said he taught solar energy topics at Bennington College for many years. He formerly worked as an engineer for GE.

c. Bill Christian, Vice Chair said he's been working about 36 years in renewable energy, commercially in CA recently.

d. Andrea E. Bacchi, Chair, said she supports alternative energy and likes to hang out with energy experts. She served on the Northshaft energy committee for several years.

4. Committee vacancy (2 minutes)

Ms. Bacchi noted that there is a vacancy for any interested energy expert. Mr. Christian and Mr. Goodman have both reached out to people and will pursue their possible willingness to participate.

5. Public Comment

There were none.

6. Committee Mission Statement (2 minutes)

Ms. Bacchi read the mission statement, to wit "to make ongoing recommendations to the Select Board on matters related to the planning and implementation of policies designed to reduce energy use, to transition to renewable energy sources and production, and to provide the Town with strategies for climate resilience; and

To provide to the citizens of Shaftsbury education, consultation and connections to State and local resources with regard to energy conservation, household renewable energy electric generation systems, renewable- and low-energy heating and cooling systems, and other means for transitioning households away from fossil fuels."

a. Shaftsbury Solar Project statement (2 minutes)

Ms. Bacchi said she'd been asked by several citizens whether it isn't the job of the committee to take a stand on the Shaftsbury Solar project. She said she would like to clarify that only the Public Utility Commission has authority to approve or deny the application. Other committee members reiterated that the entire process is out of the hands of the committee and indeed the Town at this point.

7. Committee Goals Planning Discussion (30 minutes)

Ms. Bacchi reminded the group that the committee would meet the first Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. She said that any email communications other than that related to scheduling should be sent to Ms. Bacchi only, to comply with the State's Open Meeting law.

a. Select Board recommendations

b. Shaftsbury Committee Chair project communication

Ms. Bacchi said Mr. Christian had suggested that the chair of the committee be in touch with chairs of the other committee. Such communication could ensure that other committees' activities are in sync with the mission of the energy committee. Mr. Goodman suggested even budget discussions or project design on the part of the Select Board and Town staff include representation from the energy committee. For example, is the purchase of a gas-powered tool necessary? Is it appropriate to plant cool season grasses that need constant mowing rather than native perennials? Mr. Beach noted that the lithium battery issue is a fraught one at present.

c. Shaftsbury citizens education and outreach

i. MERP (Municipal Energy Resilience Program) Grant Award

8. Other Business (5 minutes)

9. Review of Action Items (2 minutes)

Ms. Bacchi will send out the SMART goals formula to assist in developing goals for the committee.

10. Adjournment