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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

Meeting Minutes

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Energy Committee

Date of Meeting: August 6, 2024

Members Present: Andrea Bacchi (chair), Wayne Goodman, Bill Christian, Dave Beach

1. Call to Order (1 minute)

The meeting came to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement (1 minute)

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

3. Minutes, 7/2/24

Mr. Goodman moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Beach seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

4. Committee vacancy (1 minutes)

Mr. Goodman reached out to three people, each of whom said no. Callie Fishburn (of BCRC) might be interested. Mr. Goodman will ask her.

5. Public Comment

There was none.

6. Committee Goals Planning Discussion (40 minutes)

Ms. Bacchi suggested discussing a few immediate goals. Mr. Beach sent in a few ideas. He said they were simply thoughts on energy issues that need to be put on the to-do list. He will synopsize them and prioritize them if he can. Mr. Goodman thought the group could prioritize.

Ms. Bacchi mentioned some of her goals:

- recruit a new member by December;
- implement an email campaign to educate Shaftsbury residents (on items such as Window Dressers; Ms. Bacchi worries that some people don't realize they are eligible for such programs);

[A discussion was held: some folks might like to volunteer to help with such programs; the Heat Squad works with families to do thorough energy assessments; Mr. Beach wondered whether Window Dressers might be renamed to better connote their weatherization focus (not mannequins in a department store window. Mr. Goodman thought this is a national project.)]

- Ms. Bacchi asked about a monthly email campaign. Committee members agreed to review each email
- Ms. Bacchi asked about a resources page on the website. She would build it using the software Canva.
- A small scale renewable project, maybe in association with the new community center. Mr. Goodman said there are many small scale solar installers in the area and a small scale wind installer in Manchester; the potential to work for schools (and to do trainings in renewable energy for the tech center students while installing);

Mr. Beach commented on how slowly Vermont is approaching its renewable goal, and how quickly Vermont is losing farms. Mr. Goodman brought up small module reactors (SMRs)

Mr. Goodman moved to approve a monthly email campaign and a resources page. Mr. Christian seconded the motion. Ms. Bacchi said there are many ways to collect email addresses for the campaign. Ms. Bacchi will confirm that the MERF funds can be used for these purposes and that the Town supports these actions.

Mr. Beach asked whether goals should be only Shaftsbury-oriented, or can they be more general? Ms. Bacchi thought both.

Mr. Goodman thought the committee should reach out to the Select Board to ask that they consult with the committee before taking action on anything involving energy use. Ms. Bacchi will draft such a statement and share with the committee. Mr. Beach mentioned issues with a drought in Canada reducing the availability of hydropower, for which reason batteries should be charged during the day, when solar is available. Mr. Goodman said he thinks residential users should be charged for electricity the way commercial users are – with demand charges. <https://www.dsireusa.org/> is a useful database of state policies on energy use.

7. Other Business (5 minutes)

Mr. Goodman said HydroQuebec's reducing power to Vermont is a good reason for approving more and bigger renewable projects. He thought small nuclear modules (SMR) should also be an option for this reason. Mr. Beach thought the Select Board might be persuaded to support SMRs, then the Town could petition the state for adoption. Maybe Shaftsbury could be a model for the state. Mr. Goodman said the topic should be researched further before it goes before the select board.

8. Review of Action Items (2 minutes)

- Ms. B: reach out to school
- Ms. B: draft an outreach to town administration, to ask them to agree that the Energy Committee be among the decision makers
- Ms. B: get approval from SB for outreach project using MERF
- Mr. G: seek an additional volunteer for the committee
- All: send Ms. B goals for next several months
- Mr. B: will seek a presenter on small module reactors

9. Adjournment

Mr. Goodman moved to adjourn at 7:16 p.m. Mr. Christian seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.