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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

Meeting Minutes

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Energy Committee

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, September 17, 2024 - 6:00 PM at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

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

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

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

3. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Goodman moved to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Mr. Christian seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Committee Goals

The **copy for contacting public officials** & committee chairs was tabled.

Ms. Bacchi reported that she **presented the marketing campaign idea to the Select Board** at their Sept. 9 meeting. They offered their full support for the idea.

Ms. Bacchi asked the members to **provide bios & headshots for Shaftsbury Town website**. She asked to receive them by October 10.

Ms. Bacchi said the Select Board has expressed an interest in **choosing and siting charging stations**. Mr. Christian said level 2 is less expensive but significantly slower (10-15 miles of range per hour). It would be appropriate for the school but not so much at Cole Hall (now, but perhaps in the future).

Mr. Beach said isolated charging stations have become targets for thieves, who harvest their copper wires. He said China is moving toward swapped-out batteries. He said it's kind of like a car wash, where you drive in, have a new battery installed, and pay via credit card. He said major US auto makers are also heading that way. He noted that it avoids folks using fast-charge services, which greatly shorten the life of a battery. He asked in summary: what's the future of charging stations?

Mr. Goodman said we don't have the luxury of waiting for those technologies to work themselves out if we intend to meet the state's 2050 energy goals. He suggested that a mix of level 2 and fast-charging level 3 stations is

needed. He said in the Town the best location for a level 3 charger is Cole Hall. He said he hoped we could move toward commercially provided charging stations at Cole Hall and other Town-sponsored stations. He said if the Town should acquire an electric vehicle, a level 3 charging station at Cole Hall (or, for example, the post office) would make a lot of sense. A level 2 charger would make sense at the school. Ms. Bacchi said it also makes the Town a more welcoming feature.

Mr. Christian said charging speed is controlled by both the station's capacity and the battery's capacity. The committee discussed the availability of lithium worldwide.

Mr. Goodman said if we get to the point in the next several years where we don't need to use lithium, that would be an even bigger reason for relying on commercial vendors. He said the Town should avoid owning, managing and operating their own charging stations. Towns he knows of would make that choice now. Mr. Goodman said he thinks we should engage with one or more third party vendors to have a look at the town's demographics to ascertain how many and what kinds of chargers the town could support. (Bennington is an example of a town with multiple chargers of various levels run by private businesses.)

Ms. Bacchi and Mr. Goodman mentioned mobile battery chargers, such as might be needed at a concert facility. Mr. Goodman said Green Mountain Power makes use of such technology in emergencies.

Mr. Beach wondered whether society is subsidizing wealthy individuals who can afford electric vehicles and can afford to wear out their batteries faster.

Mr. Beach said his presence on the committee is to bring out other possibilities, such as nuclear, that might get us to our energy goals faster. Nuclear power could generate so much electricity we could engage in wide-scale carbon sequestration. Mr. Christian said so far nuclear can't compete with wind and solar, though he'd like to see that change. He noted that society subsidizes fossil fuels by not requiring those companies to pay the real cost of using fossil fuels. It makes it therefore very hard for other technologies to compete with fossil fuels. Mr. Beach expressed his concern that we're putting all our eggs in the lithium basket.

The group discussed efficiency of power plants and the battery charging process. Mr. Christian said he hopes we will be able to charge at work during the day when we can use solar, to avoid charging at night using natural gas.

Mr. Goodman said the worst possible way to move forward is to not do anything. He suggested the next step should be to reach out to charging providers to examine the town's situation.

Mr. Christian will contact the Bennington Energy Committee. Mr. Goodman will reach out to Callie Fishburn at the Regional Commission. Their goal: to find some commercial vendors of charging stations.

6. Other Business

The Renewable Energy Conference is scheduled for Oct 16 and 17 in Burlington.

Mr. Goodman described the agenda for a meeting in Pownal coming up on downstream hazards of climate change.

7. Review of Action Items

8. Adjournment

Mr. Goodman moved to adjourn the meeting at about 6:18. Mr. Beach seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.