

## **LEE ENERGY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

### **August 29, 2023**

**ATTENDANCE:** Don Anderson, Louis Grondin, Carol Doering, Mary Woodward, Barb Wauchope, Katrin Kasper (SB Representative)

The minutes of the 7-25 -23 meeting of the Energy Committee was circulated – a name was corrected and then approved by the commission members in a voice vote.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Initial discussion regarded the transfer of the Energy Committee to that of an Energy Commission, which starts with this meeting.
2. The initial discussion of the Commission regarded the Energy Goals for the town and comparison to the Peterborough example disbursed to the Commission members via e-mail:
  - a. The Goals of Peterborough are to have 100% renewable electricity energy community wide by 2030 and 100% Renewable of all energy sources by 2050.
  - b. As Mary Woodward indicated this very comprehensive is only an example from which we need to evaluate what works for Lee. For example, she hoped Lee would bring Biodiversity into its plan.
  - c. It was discussed how Lee can build up from a baseline before implementing general goals with the use of Police and Fire Department vehicles switching over to electric as an example as possible next steps. It was agreed a baseline for Lee was very important to establish for the residents.
  - d. It was asked if we had a deadline for developing goals and it was discussed that an ideal time would be through a Warrant Article to the town for voting. The Commission would have to present it's suggestion to the Select Board by the end of the year to do so.
  - e. Katrin presented to the Commission that the Select Board is working on a historically different Capital Improvement Plan for the town. One of the goals is to get an efficiency metric for all of the town's buildings, specifically working with Eversource to do audits of same as they are looking for town "stories" to tell and feel that Lee's problems with building construction around windows (and not just replacement windows) is "exciting" to them. She also mentioned there are 2 tickets to the LES Conference on 11/2/23 available to Lee as well.
  - f. Katrin also indicated that there is a \$23,810 grant for the Town of Lee to develop a Natural Resources Map, working with UNH, which was felt could include Biodiversity and the Town's long-term health. Strafford County also has a map of Animal Pathways already developed. Mary indicated that Cape Cod had a wonderful example of a Natural Resources Map that included low-income housing and where solar farms would have the least impact. It was felt that

Katherine Fisher and or Anne Tappan could be valuable resources for the Commission in this regard.

- g. It was felt that developing the baseline for Lee is critical and discussed how we do it. For example, how do we find out how many residences have solar arrays? Some of our residences, for example, are “off grid.” Google maps is not 100% accurate due to our tree population and how many having 3 phase power poles sources of energy supply are not directly known. We will be able to get some information from our Community Power initiative but much of it will have to be determined or estimated. It was felt Caren Rossi would be a good place to start and Lou agreed to contact her.
  - h. As for the most advantageous manner to go after renewables it was felt that Community Power Aggregation would be the fastest method. Mary gave the example of Community Solar of VT as well as some local people intending to set up smaller co-operative solar arrays. Katrin indicated that both Kingston and Farmington are discussing 5MW arrays. She also noted that a couple of models proposed included “goat maintenance” agreements, and blueberry farms was added in the discussion. It continues to feel that the most advantageous area for solar arrays would be over present-day parking. More opportunities surface as renewables become cheaper so the plan must remain flexible, which would fit recommending it as a “living document” the same as Peterborough’s.
  - i. It was asked if anyone was speaking with the new “Starbucks” at the circle and it was felt they were going by the “presently required building standards” which the commission knows from prior discussions are “out of date” by 6 years in NH. (A follow up question not brought up in the meeting is whether the Commission should recommend to the Select Board tighter building efficiency codes for Lee).
3. Regarding specific present day energy cost savings for the town:
- a. Lou indicated that the library trustees are handling all of the library items directly with their contractor moving forward.
  - b. This led to discussions of the savings already through conservation programs and how to present it. Much of the discussion was around a table at the Lee Fair on 9/16, held from Noon to the fireworks at night, although the booth can end sooner. It was discussed we should do the following:
    - i. Get the person on the microphone to tout the Energy Commission Booth.
    - ii. Ask to get the Revision Solar “Sunsquatch.” An e-mail was sent to Caitlin Brooke of Revision Energy, recommended by Rachel Eades, while at the meeting requesting help.
    - iii. Emily Manns of Standard Power also has not provided much as of yet and so we should contact her—person to do so?
    - iv. Discussion of the electric bike or equivalent to get kids interested. Mary to call.

- v. Lou will contact Caren Rossi as to booth location.
  - vi. Don will provide a 10X10' pop-up.
  - vii. The need for a story to present to the town about what has been saved was discussed and we hoped Barb would be able to pull together a story with numbers for it. Others would support whatever he needs to do so.
  - c. The fund for Energy Efficiency was not discussed.
  - d. Regarding just the small efficiency items for the Public Safety Complex the need to create the Energy Efficiency Roadmap, as discussed above, as well as the Energy Handbook and Homeowners guide was not discussed.
  - e. Transfer station solar: Katrin presented the Energy Communicator for the Solar Array on the Recycling Center as a story to tell for the baseline and the discussion centered around how it is affected by rainy days, which are expected to increase with "global warming" making future NH weather similar to present North Carolina. In addition, she noted that there is a \$45,000 Grant for an Electric Bobcat, powered by Solar, that Lee is in the running for use at the recycling center. Lee would contribute 5%, 80% from Volkswagen money.
  - f. Mast Way: Mary called the School Board's facilities person as mentioned previously, but they are leaving their job soon, as is the Superintendent.
  - g. Solar Power Farms: No discussion on specifics.
  - h. There was a discussion on Electrical Vehicle Charging as Katrin indicated that Lee is in the running for 2 locations including a Level 3 near the Lee Traffic Circle. Discussion included the maintenance of such charging stations with experienced drivers indicating EV Go was poorly maintained, Charge Point often needed maintenance, and the best seemed to be Electrify America. There is one at the Kittery outlets and many Wal-Marts.
4. Changing our meeting times to evenings was discussed as a means to increase our numbers but it was felt that is not necessary as many people can be available during the day and unless the Commission itself felt a change was needed it was better to leave it during the day. Next meeting to be held on 9/19 to prepare any recommendations for the Town Hall Building meeting of the Select Board on 9/25/23. The RFP is on the town web site.
  5. Regarding the whole house monitor it was not discussed.
  6. Community Power PUC application is still expected to be implemented in the Fall of 2023 based on an E-Mail update from Emily Manns that includes Lee with 4 other towns. We need to prepare how we will educate the town residents when implemented.
  7. Regarding updating the town web site—we still need to update: CIP improvements (2017-2024), Energy Handbook, Homeowner guides and Energy Efficiency Road Map for the town buildings. The goal is still prior to budget discussions at the end of the year.
  8. Not discussed: the need to promote an ordinance for preventing taxation of solar arrays in the town and not just depend on the goodness of the assessor to not include it.

9. Regarding an expert on heat pumps Matt Rusteika, and the possible tree expert for education, no discussion.

NEW BUSINESS:

A definite goal of the new commission was presented but not discussed in detail: The need to develop a Warrant Article for, money to be put into a fund to buy out the Solar Array at the Recycling Center from the finance company within the 6-year period.

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM.